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‘Election, what election?’ Low level campaigns and detrimental electoral outcomes in safe constituencies

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Declaration

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I declare that, except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is entirely my own work, and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Alia F Middleton

Abstract

Political parties in the United Kingdom are increasingly focusing their constituency-level campaigns on marginal seats; such a focus has been echoed by academic researchers studying the effectiveness of intense constituency campaigning in boosting local electoral outcomes. Yet there has been little investigation into the impact of the redirection of campaigning resources on safe constituencies; while existing research suggests that intense campaigns are effective in boosting local electoral outcomes, it is possible that a relative lack of campaigning may be harmful. This thesis addresses this gap by exploring in detail the detrimental impact of low level campaigning on both turnout and vote share in safe constituencies by the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats.

The study is situated within the literature of campaign effectiveness, also drawing on theories of voter behaviour. It offers a critical evaluation of existing research into constituency campaigning, contending not only that a lack of campaigning can be harmful, but also that these effects are impacted by nuances of local incumbency and party differentials. To explore this, the thesis conducts a quantitative examination of the effects of constituency campaigning conducted at UK general elections from 1987 to 2010. It also expands existing literature in two ways; by formulating and applying a refined way in which to measure relative levels of campaigning, and also exploring the potential of leader visits as a measure of local campaigning for the first time in the UK.

The focus on rebalancing attention towards safe constituencies places the concept of marginality at the core of this thesis. In exploring the concept in detail, potential explanations for the origins of marginality are considered, drawing on theories of population stability and party support bases. Using a refined measure of relative levels of campaigning, a link is established between marginality and campaigning, which also considers the important role of incumbency. When exploring the impact of low levels of campaigning, the results indicate that in many cases there is a harmful impact on both turnout and vote share, although the effects are greater for the latter. The findings suggest that local incumbency is a central factor in deciding the detrimental impact of low levels of campaigning, with such campaigns run by opposition parties resulting in far greater declines in their vote share when compared to equivalent campaigns run by incumbents.

In an era of increasing focus on marginal constituencies during election campaigns, this thesis explicitly considers the impact of a lack of campaigning in safe constituencies, the role

of incumbency and also applies new measures. In doing so, new empirical insights are produced into the importance of constituency campaigning in the UK, through an approach both rooted in and building upon existing studies.

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Ultimately my thanks go to my family, in particular my parents. This thesis is for my father, the late Dr Robert Middleton, who showed me that all PhDs eventually get finished and inspired my postgraduate career. I hope that I have made you proud, despite the many hours I pretended not to know the answers to my science homework. It is also for my mother, who has been at my side throughout, despite her attempt at proof reading only making it to page 18 because 'it was so boring she needed a nap'. Also, for my brother Paul, with all my love. At least you can finally make a decent Mojito. Lastly, this thesis is for my wonderful Uncle Ian and Auntie Michele. Thank you both for your belief in me, your constancy and love.

Chapter 1
Introduction

The quote used in the title of this thesis comes from a voter in an ultra-safe Conservative constituency during the 2010 election campaign[1]. It not only reveals her frustration with the low level of campaigning in the constituency but also neatly sums up the key theme of this thesis. Political parties in the UK spend millions of pounds at election time on local campaigning, with the candidates from the three largest parties alone spending in excess of £11.1 million during the 2010 election campaign (Electoral Commission, 2011:11). But not all constituency campaigns are equal, with parties increasingly strategically directing their resources towards marginal constituencies at recent elections. The simple First Past The Post (FPTP) majority electoral system used in the UK makes gaining the greatest number of constituencies key to winning a general election, and marginal seats with their small majorities are perceived to be those most vulnerable to changing hands. Parties increasingly target them as the constituencies most likely to help them win an election, publishing lists of such constituencies well in advance of the next election [2]. In these targeted constituencies, local election campaigning is tightly controlled and managed by both locally incumbent and opposition parties (Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2008). This focus has been encouraged by the success of the strategic targeting of constituency campaigning by Labour (Hands and Denver, 2004) during the 1997 campaign and continues into more recent elections. The most obvious recent instance of such concentration upon marginal constituencies was the donation of millions of pounds to the Conservatives by Lord Ashcroft in the build-up to the 2010 election (Cutts et al, 2012). These donations were accompanied by a concentrated campaign of pre-election canvassing, beginning in 2007 and focused upon large numbers of marginal seats.

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[1] Carole Lovell, Ramsey wrote: 'Election, what election? I live in Ramsey and have had nothing from any party regarding the election, nor have I seen anyone. Don't we matter in this part of the county?' 19 April 2010 (BBC, 2010d). Ramsey is situated in Cambridgeshire North West which has been a safe Conservative seat since its foundation in 1997. During the 2010 election campaign, the incumbent Shailesh Varma was defending a majority of 20 percentage points, making the constituency ultra-safe.

[2] see Wintour, 2013 for Labour's 2015 targets, and although the Conservatives have not yet confirmed also Grice, 2012

However, the full implications of this focus on marginal constituencies have not been appreciated in existing literature. Intense campaigning in marginal constituencies has been demonstrated to be effective in boosting local electoral outcomes (operationalised in this thesis as turnout and party vote share); parties increasingly target marginal constituencies, but existing research has not considered what impact such targeting has on local electoral outcomes in safe constituencies. It follows that if campaigning has a positive impact on turnout and vote share where it is intense (i.e. in marginal seats), then the relative absence of campaigning (i.e. in safe constituencies) may have a negative effect.

This concentration of resources upon marginal constituencies in the hope of a positive effect on local results has not been a long-standing phenomenon. For much of the twentieth century, constituency campaigning in the UK was considered as nothing more than an irrelevant nuisance to voters; a sideshow to the national campaign. In an age in which televisions brought the national leaders into the living rooms of voters, the well-regarded Nuffield election studies dismissed constituency campaigns as little more than rituals (Butler and Kavanagh, 1998) to keep local party members occupied, which had 'little success in changing political attitudes' (Kavanagh, 1970: 87). This was despite evidence from case studies of constituency campaigns in the UK (Holt and Turner, 1968, Bochel and Denver, 1971, 1972) which offered clear evidence that local campaigning was effective in boosting both party vote share and local turnout.

Over the past two decades there has been a dramatic upswing of interest in local campaigning by both political parties and academics in the UK. In an attempt to rebalance the conversation on the effectiveness of local campaigning in the UK by testing the conclusions of the Nuffield studies, empirical examinations of the effectiveness of campaigning in altering local outcomes (both vote shares and turnout) have been produced. Their operationalisations of campaigning vary between three main groups with Denver and Hands (see 1992, 1997b) predominantly using agent survey data, Johnston and Pattie (1995, 2008 among others) using expenditure data and Seyd and Whiteley (1992, 2002) using member survey data. However, their conclusions remain the same; targeting resources on marginal constituencies has been described as 'rational' (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b: 388), and when parties have not adhered to it (such as the Conservatives in the 1990s, see Denver, Hands and Henig, 1998) their campaigns have proved ineffective. Of course, such a focus on marginal constituencies is entirely rational; in a FPTP system such as the UK, parties win elections by winning constituencies, and marginal seats are those most likely to change hands. If constituency campaigning is effective (as research suggests), it makes sense to

concentrate it in those constituencies which are most likely to be won or lost. Yet despite these conclusions, and amidst the wide-spread adoption of targeting by parties, only a partial appreciation of the full impact of such strategic constituency campaigning has been formed.

The departure point of this thesis is the development of the mirror image of this argument; if the existing evidence is that intense campaigns in marginal constituencies positively impact electoral outcomes, then do low level campaigns in safe constituencies have a negative impact? By exploring the main hypothesis that *low level campaigns have a detrimental impact upon electoral outcomes in safe constituencies,* this thesis portrays a more holistic picture of the true impact of constituency campaigning. It does so by building on existing evidence from marginal constituencies and shifts the emphasis to consider what happens when a constituency is neglected. Three sub-hypotheses (*Marginality originates in constituency populations*, *Opposition candidates in safe constituencies are more likely to run detrimental low level campaigns* and *The detrimental impact of low level campaigns varies across parties)* are also examined to consider why this relationship exists, investigating the role that local incumbency and different parties play. Within each of these hypotheses are a series of nested hypotheses, exploring the variations introduced by party, incumbency and campaigning type. The thesis also proposes the inclusion of a new measure of campaign intensity to work alongside expenditure and campaign activity data. This variable is that of leader visits: the widely publicised tours that party leaders make during the short election campaign to certain constituencies. This is the first work to engage fully with this variable in the UK context, drawing on recent evidence from both Canada (Carty and Eagles, 2005) and the USA (Holbrook, 2002) that these visits positively affect party vote shares. It also builds on existing research in this area by extending the examination of leader visit effectiveness to consider whether they affect local turnout, echoing the dual approach taken to electoral outcomes elsewhere in this thesis.

Development of project

Elections have always struck me as the chance for political parties to make history; by losing spectacularly, winning by a landslide or not quite fulfilling their predicted potential. My original intention had been to examine trends in tactical voting over the period to explore how parties worked together, taking advantage of campaign effectiveness, by strategically deploying resources. Yet the more I read about the tactics and effort involved in such campaigns operating in specific constituencies, the more I wondered about those numerous

other constituencies which were not discussed. The further I read I could still only find cursory references to safe constituencies amid the articles demonstrating that intense campaigns were effective. I began to wonder how this redirection of attention to marginal constituencies might impact a safe constituency. After all, it is not unknown for safe seats to change hands, as demonstrated by the track record of my home constituency. Growing up in a small rural village in the Home Counties it was perhaps inevitable that my local constituency was safely Conservative throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. With the local voters seemingly swept along with the tide of New Labour in 1997, the Conservative incumbent was defeated. It then became a fairly safe Labour constituency (10.6 percentage points), before the incumbent's majority was eroded to 2.8 percentage points (ultra-marginal) in 2001. The Conservatives won the seat back in 2005 (with a 13.3 percentage point majority, making it fairly safe), before increasing their vote share to over 35 points in 2010 (thereby becoming an ultra-safe constituency). These swings not only between Labour and the Conservatives, but particularly between different degrees of marginality intrigued me: a safe Conservative constituency becoming a safe Labour constituency and, when the novelty of the brief flirtation with New Labour had worn off, becoming firstly an ultra-marginal Labour seat and then an ultra-safe Conservative seat – indeed the seat is presently occupied by the Chairman of the Conservative Party and is currently the 16th safest Conservative constituency in the UK. This personal history demonstrated to me that parties (and indeed academics) should not take safe seats for granted.

Technological developments over recent elections mean that, more so now than ever, UK voters can both get involved in and are more exposed to coverage of general election campaigns. During the 2010 general election the BBC website covered the campaign with rolling text and video[3], including a facility for members of the public to join in the coverage via email or Twitter on any subject which interested them. Amongst opinions on the debates, policy announcements and leaders, some voters chose to vocalise their frustration at the lack of campaigning in their constituencies, including the voter in the safe seat who provided the quote used in the title of this thesis. Another contributing voter felt 'ignored and disenfranchised…living in a constituency that no political party is targeting'[4]. Naturally,

[3] The BBC has had a dedicated section of its website for elections since 1997, but with the rise in the usage of social media since the 2005 election, 2010 was the first election at which such a wide range of technology was in use.

[4] Quote by Yvonne Connell, Bexleyheath and Crayford, 25th April 2010 (BBC, 2010e)

political parties have to be rational in regards to where they use their resources at election time, but it would appear that their concentration on marginal constituencies has not gone unnoticed by some. Partisan dealignment has also increased the potential of campaigning to affect vote choice (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2002) by transforming the relationship between parties and voters over the past half century. Drawing on Orbell's (1970) theories regarding levels of political interest, those voters with a higher level of political interest would be expected to be more aware of the level of campaigning in their constituency. Indeed, the growth of social media may have enhanced this awareness; the ability to interact with coverage of the campaign on many media offer increasing ways in which voters in safe constituencies can compare their local campaign to others.

It was a combination of the lack of attention paid to safe constituencies in the UK by existing research, my own experience of volatile 'safe' constituencies and a sense that some voters are increasingly aware of the level of campaigning in their seat that prompted me to investigate the impact of low level campaigns. While the positive impact of intense campaigning in marginal constituencies during UK elections is well-documented, the existing literature has failed to investigate the potential detrimental effects of a lack of campaigning in safe constituencies. The case studied in this thesis is the UK and comparisons are made not only over the 1987 to 2010 period, but also among the three largest political parties (the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats) in different local incumbencies. By examining multiple elections over this period in place of an isolated election study, this thesis effectively captures the evolution of this increasingly strategic targeting of resources on the most marginal constituencies and examines the potential impact this has had on safer constituencies.

The crucial question here is why there should be concern about what happens in safe constituencies at all. After all, marginal constituencies are not only where the most campaigning takes place but also where the effects of such campaigning can be most dramatic (a seat changing hands). The conventional identification of safe and marginal constituencies is based upon the size of the majority in a constituency going into an election campaign. Constituencies with majorities of 9.99 percentage points and below are identified as marginal (Hough and Cracknell, 2013), whereas those with majorities of 10 percentage points and above are safe. At the most basic level, safe constituencies are consistently the largest proportion of constituencies in the UK, with over two-thirds of all seats being safe at elections (see chapter four). In fact, when constituencies at elections between 1987 and 2010 are divided into conventional five categories of marginality (as used by Pippa Norris, 2009a,

2009b) ranging from ultra-marginal to ultra-safe, by far the greatest proportion of constituencies falls into the ultra-safe category. The categories used here are a conventional way of identifying constituencies with different degrees of marginality. They increase in regular increments from ultra-marginal (those with a majority of 4.99 percentage points), very marginal, fairly safe, very safe and through to ultra-safe constituencies (those with previous majorities of 20 percentage points and above). Not only are the majority of constituencies in the UK safe, they are extremely safe. Perhaps as a result they are neglected both by parties at election time and academic researchers in favour of marginal constituencies. This thesis argues that in order to gain a full appreciation of the true effects of constituency campaigning, it makes sense to investigate all potential ramifications of varying levels of campaigning, particularly if the vast majority of constituencies are not investigated in detail in existing research. However, it is not the aim to shift the focus away from marginal constituencies. Rather, what is intended is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the potential harm being done to safer constituencies.

If there is a detrimental impact upon electoral outcomes in safe seats caused by low level campaigning, there is potential for these detrimental effects to be cumulative. A safe constituency may be neglected over the course of several elections, leading to a decline in the vote share of the incumbent party which may reach the extent that the previously safe constituency becomes marginal. Therefore, if continually neglected safe constituencies have the potential to become resource-hungry marginal constituencies, parties may be making future work for themselves.

Methodological approach

To produce accurate and detailed conclusions in regards to the potentially detrimental impact of a lack of campaigning in safe constituencies, detailed methodological considerations have been made. To answer the hypothesis and associated research questions, a quantitative approach has been employed, incorporating data from a wide range of sources across the 1987 to 2010 period. Although the full methodology of this thesis will be explored in detail in chapter three, there are several key choices made to be discussed here. Two reasons have led to the use of a large-scale quantitative study to examine the hypothesis. Firstly, while the earlier studies of constituency campaigning were constituency case studies, those conducted since the revival of interest in such campaigns have been large-scale quantitative studies. In arguing that low level campaigning has a detrimental effect upon electoral outcomes, the

mirror image of the existing argument in favour of intense campaign effectiveness is presented. It is important, therefore, to make the study as comparable as possible to existing studies in the area, which has led to a quantitative approach. Secondly, by proposing leader visits as a new addition to the definition of campaigning, a conventional approach was undertaken to make the study comparable to the existing literature on campaigns in order to reconcile the variable with existing measures.

Such an approach necessitated statistical training from a variety of sources, but often the most problematic element was the availability of data (a full discussion is presented in chapter three). Agent survey data for 2005 proved particularly hard to find, and the same data for 2010 were released in a non-compatible format. Consequently, a decision was made to employ spending data as the primary measure of campaigning, supplemented with survey data where possible. Primary data on leader visits during the 2010 campaign were also collected, necessitating rigorous planning and application on every day of the campaign. The result is a comprehensive dataset covering a range of data and bringing them together. Indeed, the dataset holds a far wider range of data than have been used in this thesis, with plenty of scope for future use.

Thesis structure

The remainder of this thesis is divided into nine chapters, the second and third frame the study both theoretically and methodologically, the fourth and fifth analyse the key variables of marginality and campaign intensity, the sixth and seventh test the main hypothesis in detail, the eighth chapter engages with a new campaigning variable – leader visits, before the thesis ends with conclusions drawn from the analysis.

The next chapter examines *Voting Behaviour, Campaigns and Effectiveness*. This second chapter engages in detail with the theory and empirical evidence which have underpinned and informed this thesis, and explains the approaches taken. There are differing explanations as to why people vote and why they vote the way that they do, originating from sociological factors, partisan attachments or simple rationality. Instead of selecting just one of these explanations for voter behaviour in the UK over the period, the chapter proposes a combined rational/sociological model in which individuals can vote for a variety of reasons. It also considers the role that campaigns play in affecting voter decisions, arguing that the most important role of campaigns is to provide information to voters. Whether it is the leaflet

dropped through the door or a party agent canvassing on the doorstep, campaigns are designed to present the voter with the greatest possible amount of information on party positions to enable both voter turnout and vote choice. Authors who have argued that campaigning is irrelevant (such as Butler and Kavanagh, 1974) have often drawn not only on a single dependent variable (i.e. vote share or turnout), but a single theoretical trend. The approach presented here argues that campaigns have the ability to affect *both* whether someone votes in the first place (turnout), and if they do, how they vote (vote share). The chapter considers empirical evidence in support of the effectiveness of campaigning, particularly from the USA and UK, finding that campaigning is effective in boosting both turnout and vote share. Finally, the key theme of this thesis, marginality, and the account of it in existing literature is presented, particularly engaging with the debate over the appropriateness of the conventional definition of marginality in the UK. As a prelude to the study that follows, the impact of marginality upon campaigning is detailed, with clear empirical evidence of the increased redirection of resources by political parties in the UK.

The third chapter *Thesis Methodology s*ets out the thesis hypothesis and considers the various methodological choices made in answering it. The hypotheses nested within this overall hypothesis are formulated, before each of the associated variables are explained and engaged with, including the two dimensions of the dependent variable of electoral outcomes. A quantitative approach has been taken to answer the hypotheses and the justifications of using this will be examined here, including arguments in favour of validity and the influence of existing research in the area. It also considers why the parameters of the study have been set at elections in the UK between 1987 and 2010, arguing that it allows an examination of the increasing trend towards campaigning in marginal constituencies over time, yet remains manageable enough to engage sufficiently with the thesis hypothesis. As this is a quantitative study, care is taken to explain the sources of data and the method of data collection for all variables used in analysis, paying particular attention to the collection of original data on leader visits. An overview of the analysis methods and techniques is provided, before a detailed plan of the analysis to be conducted in later chapters is set out.

Marginality, the fourth chapter of this thesis is the first that engages empirically with the overall thesis hypothesis by investigating the key concept of marginality (whether a seat is marginal or safe). It enables the understanding of what it means to be a marginal or safe constituency in the UK during the 1987 to 2010 period. By drawing on existing research, two primary factors underlying marginality are drawn out; vote proximity (the closer the first two parties are, the more marginal the constituency is) and seat turnover (when a seat changes

hands). Patterns of constituency marginality over the period of the thesis are studied, finding that safe constituencies (particularly the very safest) consistently represent the majority of constituencies in the UK, which supports the rebalancing of academic attention in their favour. There has also been a lack of understanding and engagement of the reasons behind varying levels of constituency safety, so two theories are put forward to fill this gap. The first is that population stability is a key element of constituency marginality. High rates of population turnover may mean constant fluctuations of party support, preventing the establishment of large majorities. The second theory centres on traditional bases of party support, suggesting that safe constituencies are more likely than marginal constituencies to represent the traditional sources of the incumbent party's support. This chapter offers an opportunity to engage with a concept that is not readily understood and attempts to draw some conclusions about marginality and its origins.

In *Campaigning and Marginality*, the fifth chapter examines the other key variable of this thesis: constituency campaigning. It defines campaigning over the 1987 to 2010 period as largely based on campaign expenditure figures with additional variables from Denver and Hands' agent surveys from 1992 to 2001 (leader visits in 2010 are discussed in the eighth chapter). The varying trends in campaigning are contrasted between the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats, before factors affecting levels of campaigning are examined. By investigating whether socio-demographics, local incumbency or party resource factors (such as numbers of local members) affect levels of campaigning, a model is constructed examining the true effect of marginality on levels of campaign intensity. While initial investigations of the relationship between marginality and campaign intensity appear positive, when a model is constructed the relationship is not captured effectively. To counter this the chapter develops an original measure of levels of campaigning based upon and refined from Denver, Hands and McAllister's (2004) study based on constituency campaigning quartile measures, with the first quartile representing the lowest levels of campaigning. Whereas the measure developed in the existing study was not clearly defined between parties, this chapter argues that a single measure underestimates campaigning by the Liberal Democrats. Incumbency and party factors are instead included here to produce a refined measure which assesses relative campaign intensity for all parties. A separate measure is developed for the impact on turnout which incorporates levels of campaigning by the top two parties in a constituency, thereby enabling the identification of relative levels of campaigning. This measure is then tested against constituency marginality, with the results demonstrating that campaigns in the first quartile (classified as low level campaigns) are significantly related to marginality. This chapter brings together two central concepts for the

overall hypothesis, and develops a refined measure of constituency campaign levels which are able to act as shorthand for both marginality and campaigning.

The sixth and seventh chapters examine the impact of low level campaigns on the two dimensions of the dependent variable of this thesis: electoral outcomes operationalised as vote share and turnout. Chapter six, *Campaign Neglect and Turnout: does absence breed apathy?* examines the impact of low level campaigns on turnout. Patterns in turnout over the period of study show that turnout is in decline, but that this is not limited to the UK. This chapter focuses on establishing the relationship between levels of campaigning and turnout. A model is constructed, incorporating a range of control variables to examine the thesis hypotheses both implicitly (campaigning has a positive impact, so by implication the absence of it may have a negative impact) and explicitly (using the original measure of low levels of campaigning formulated earlier in the thesis). By using the original campaigning measure developed in the previous chapter, it is possible to conclude that in many cases low level campaigns have a negative impact on turnout, but this varies, particularly when considering the impact of incumbency.

Chapter seven, *Campaign Neglect and Vote Share: does absence make the heart grow fonder?*, considers the impact of low level campaigns on vote share in safe constituencies, the second dimension of local electoral outcomes. It engages in detail with the variable, considering patterns over the period before considering a range of potential explanatory factors including incumbency and socio-demographics which may affect it. As an initial testing of the relationship between campaigning and patterns of vote share, a basic model with raw campaign figures is examined, drawing on existing theoretical and empirical evidence which suggests that campaigning is effective in increasing vote share. This relationship is presented under an information theory framework, arguing that local campaigning acts as a source of information to constituency populations through which voting decisions may be altered or reinforced.

The seventh chapter, *The Effectiveness of Leader Visits at the 2010 General Election*, proposes the inclusion of a new variable into UK studies of constituency campaigning: visits by party leaders to constituencies. Drawing on original data collected by the author which has been informed by existing empirical evidence from the USA and Canada that such visits are effective in boosting party vote share, the chapter makes a case study of leader visits made during the 2010 election campaign. It considers the political context in which visits are made, discerning between offensive and defensive strategies and examining whether marginality plays a role in determining whether a constituency is visited. It tests the overall

effectiveness of leader visits in boosting vote share and turnout (reflecting the previous two chapters) discovering that these visits are not effective in boosting turnout, but those constituencies that were visited by David Cameron and Nick Clegg saw boosts in their respective local party vote shares, controlling for the social and political context. The relative effectiveness of offensive and defensive visits are then contrasted, with the results of the model revealing that offensive visits are more effective in boosting party vote share. This extended investigation into a new variable in the UK context offers a great deal of scope for future studies.

The concluding chapter considers the implications of the findings from the analysis in the preceding chapters and establishes clearly the contribution this thesis makes to the understanding of constituency campaigning; not only in examining the implications of a lack of campaigning, but also proposing the extension of the definition of campaigning to include leader visits. It also suggests clear future routes for research, including continuing the study of leader visits and engaging more with the concept of constituency marginality.

Chapter 2
Voting Behaviour, Campaigns and Marginality

Around the world political parties spend many millions of pounds on campaigning during election campaigns (for a comprehensive account of worldwide election spending see Center for Transitional and Post-Conflict Governance, 2005). In the UK, the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats spent £29.5 million (Electoral Commission, 2011:11) running their campaigns during the 2010 general election (of which the Conservatives alone spent £16.7 million). Parties are also keen to adopt new technologies enabling them to contact voters (from Twitter to Facebook) as well as sophisticated campaign management software. Election campaigns are often highly visible through publicity drives, although these can backfire. In 2010, for example, spoof versions of election posters featuring David Cameron were in the news (Ryan, 2010), and during the 2001 campaign John Prescott memorably punched a voter (Jones and Brogan, 2001).

Initially it would appear that local campaigning is alive and well, but parties do not have limitless resources. Constituency campaign expenditure is limited anyway during election campaigns in the UK (by the *Representation of the People Act 1983*: since this Act limits can be changed by Order of the Secretary of State: Great Britain, 1983; Kelly, 2005) with an increasing move towards strategic deployment. The greatest profit to be had from the local campaign in the UK is to win (or retain) control of the seat, so parties focus on those constituencies most likely to change hands: marginal constituencies, a factor enhanced by the FPTP electoral system. This has, however, left a vast number of safe constituencies relatively neglected during election campaigns, and it is the purpose of this thesis to examine what impact this has on local outcomes. This chapter sets out the building blocks for the study, engaging with the existing literature to construct a theoretical framework for the origins of marginality, the effect of marginality upon levels of campaigning, and the impact of low levels of campaigning upon local outcomes.

But do campaigns have an impact on voter behaviour, and what role does marginality play in affecting campaigning? Drawing on existing literature, this chapter argues that no single theoretical model can explain voter behaviour (here operationalised as both vote choice and the decision to vote), offering examples from the UK. Instead, there is evidence that while

some sections of constituency populations vote according to rational choice theory, others vote according to social group memberships. The key role of a campaign is to provide information which not only encourages the local population to vote by increasing knowledge of the local campaign, but can in some cases alter vote choice. Drawing on the main thesis hypothesis, this chapter engages with and constructs a framework around three concepts: marginality, campaigning and voter behaviour. In the first section, the three main schools of voter behaviour are examined, with this thesis proposing a resolution between rational choice and sociological models. In the following section, campaigns are presented as key sources of information which affect constituency populations as envisaged by information theory (Orbell, 1970). It considers not only key controversies over the effectiveness of local campaigning, but also empirical evidence that offers support. In considering the impact of campaigns upon voter behaviour, marginality is presented as a key factor affecting the intensity of such campaigns. Yet while existing literature in the UK studies the effectiveness of campaigning in marginal constituencies, there has been little discussion of safer constituencies. The chapter ends by explaining the ways in which theory has affected the approach taken by this thesis, the hypotheses proposed and what conclusions can be expected.

The Voting Decision

In the 2010 UK general election over 29.6 million people voted (BBC, 2010c), resulting in the Conservatives**,** Labour and Liberal Democrats winning 36, 29 and 23 percent of the national vote respectively. This statement encapsulates two key puzzles of electoral studies: why people choose to vote and why they vote the way that they do. The overall hypothesis of this thesis, that low level campaigns have a detrimental impact on electoral outcomes, puts these two puzzles at the heart of this study, with electoral outcomes here defined as both turnout and vote share. Yet before the impact of an absence of campaigning is examined in chapters six and seven, it is logical to consider what the drivers are of voting decisions. After all, the changes campaigning may make to this behaviour cannot be explained if there is a lack of understanding of the reasoning behind such decisions in the first place. The existing research into constituency campaign effectiveness in the UK is not often explicit regarding what approach has been taken to voter behaviour (with some notable exceptions: Johnston and Pattie, 1998a for example).

Attempts to explain how and why people vote can be divided into three models: sociological, socio-psychological and rational choice theories. The first is based on a series of empirical investigations conducted in the first half of the twentieth century and explains the decision

on how to vote as dependent upon group and social memberships, such as class and religion. Socio-psychological models build on this by suggesting that partisan identity is formed through socialisation processes. Rational choice theories of voting, as the name suggests, posit voters as rational beings who vote if the costs are not too high and for the party that offers them the greatest benefits. Yet each of these models has failings in its explanatory power, and none comprehensively explains both the decision to vote and how to vote.

Sociological theories of voting – group and class membership

The first theoretical model of voting behaviour is the sociological model, proposing that group memberships such as class, religion and race form the decision on how to vote. This theory originated from trends discovered in the three early works: *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944), *Voting* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954) and *Personal Influence* (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). These studies were in-depth examinations of election campaigns in specific geographical areas which aimed to gain a comprehensive picture of the election campaign. *The People's Choice*, for example examined voters in Erie county over the course of the 1940 presidential campaign and examined at what point their vote choice was made, whereas *Voting* developed the earlier study and transported the study to Elmira county for the 1948 presidential campaign. Yet the discovery of the importance of group membership in vote choice formation by Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) was unexpected, as the original aim had been to explore voting as an individual behaviour affected by exposure to the media. However, the findings of the study instead indicated clear links between social group memberships and their vote choice. This was echoed by the study of the population of Elmira in *Voting* where 'class… ethnic and…ecological divisions of the population' (Berelson, et al., 1954: 75) were found to be of high explanatory value. Social groups represent a stable source in explaining voter behaviour, being maintained across generations; as such they change only gradually. Sociological models not only account for voting according to social group memberships; voters under the model actively vote in the interests of their group (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944: 148).

Lazarsfeld et al. examined the role of opinion leaders in social groups, finding that they are the more active members who engaged in political discourse more often than other members of the same social group. Ideas and opinions 'often flow from radio and print to the opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of the population' (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944: 151). As such they operate as intermediaries or interpreters of campaign information, with

less active members of the group influenced by their interpretation. This was confirmed by Berelson et al. (1954:113) who stated that opinion leaders 'represent or symbolise the given group's norms'.

There is evidence supporting such sociological theories in the UK, particularly considering the link between social class and voter behaviour – a relationship deemed to be particularly strong in the UK (Alford, 1963). Indicative of this is Pulzer's (1972:102) oft quoted conclusion that class is the central element in British politics, with evidence suggesting that other group memberships found in the US studies such as religion and ethnicity are relatively weak in the UK. Empirical studies as employed in the USA were transferrable to the UK and focused in detail on voting and local context in specific parliamentary constituencies.[5] There was of course a mismatch between the American and British studies in regards to the context of the elections studied; whereas the UK studies explored general elections, the two earlier seminal American studies focused on presidential campaigns, with the national nature of the competition and Electoral College system altering the context. Despite this difference, studies in both nations focused on the voting decision, not the electoral outcome, with the British studies largely reflecting the American findings (Butler and Stokes, 1969). Class membership was found to be the key determinant of voter behaviour in the UK, with the campaign having no impact on their final voting decision. The role of class in explaining British voter behaviour was widely accepted, although largely in place of the socio-economic measures used in the American studies (Rose, 1968) the most effective measure of British class was found to be differentiations between occupations; specifically routine and non-routine (Bonham, 1954). Drawing on criticisms of Lazarsfeld et al. in explaining group interactions, British sociological studies (Bealey, Blondel and McCann, 1965) considered the impact of groups on others, particularly the adjustment of voter behaviour according to the size of the class groups in the locale, with routine workers (traditionally Labour-supporting voters) in a predominantly non- routine constituency voting Conservative. Like the US studies, however, group membership could not explain all voting decisions, with some being more receptive to the campaign messages.

Sociological theories of voter behaviour have been criticised from both methodological and theoretical standpoints. First, the very methodology underpinning the seminal US studies

[5] Benney, Gray and Pear (1956) examined Greenwich, while Milne and Mackenzie (1954 and 1958) explored Bristol South East.

has been heavily criticised as offering only a 'partial account of the behaviour of the American voter' (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960: 15); the issue being that they focused on case studies and interviews conducted in a small area (Elmira for example). Specific criticisms were also raised against *The People's Choice* by Rossi (1964) in regards to how the authors adapted their study once their original hypotheses had been proved invalid. As discussed above, the original intention of the authors of the study was to examine the effect of mass media upon voting decisions. Influenced by this hypothesis, the study was constructed accordingly, with detailed content analysis of the local media during the campaign. This had implications when the overriding evidence for the importance of social groups in the vote decision emerged, with the researchers being forced to adapt their study accordingly. Rossi argues that this meant that key factors of the importance of social group membership, such as the discovery of the significant differences observed between different types of Christianity, were ineffectively explained. Regarding this as 'evidence of their inability to assimilate its implications properly' (Rossi, 1964: 317), such failings may be attributed to the forced change of direction of the book.

Secondly, various elements of the sociological theories themselves have given rise to criticism. Some (in particular Campbell et al., 1960) have argued that the sociological theory does not always match reality; particularly the contrasts between social group durability and the reality of vote fluctuations between elections. If social groups are durable predictors of voter behaviour, then fluctuations in the vote which occur between elections cannot be explained by the model. Instead they can be interpreted as due instead to voter attitudes, with the ability for sociological voting theories to make meaningful statements about motivations for voting being limited. They argue that 'voting is an act of individual human beings' (Campbell et al., 1960: 13), so in order to understand voting it is essential to uncover the motivations for voting rather than operate along broad sociological theories of group homogeneity. Even Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) admit that not everyone votes according to their social groups, but the theory does not offer clear explanations of either why some people vote against their social group, or indeed how an individual's membership of multiple social groups (for example, a 40 year old, white, Catholic manual worker) operates in the voting process.

Finally, there is clear evidence (Crewe, Särlvik and Alt, 1977 and Rose, 1974) that the influence of class upon voting in the UK has declined rapidly. Indeed, in the updated edition of *Political Change and Britain*, Butler and Stokes (1974:203) perceived the decline of class

voting to be ‘one of the most important aspects’ of changes in British voting behaviour in the 1970s. This ‘indisputable decline in the ability of class, measured by occupation, to structure voting choice in Britain’ (Franklin and Mughan, 1978:532) has been presented as the result of the changes in the British economy and the effect upon the workforce. The effects of the changes in the British workforce mean that between 1945 and 1983, the share of the working class voting Labour fell from 62 to 42 percent and the share of the middle class voting Conservative fell from 63 to 55 percent (Crewe, 1986). Evidence points to the importance of class membership in British voting behaviour declining (Rose and McAllister, 1986) due to changes in the structure of society.

The important element to focus on from the research into the decline of class membership and voter behaviour is the word *decline*. The studies do not propose that class voting has been eradicated; it continues to play a role in determining voter behaviour albeit at a lower level than it once did. Even with the decline demonstrated by Crewe’s (1986) figures above, well over a third of the working class (42 percent) continued to vote Labour, and a majority of the middle class (55 percent) continued to vote Conservative. Perhaps it is the definition of class as used in Britain which presents the problem, with Heath, Jowell and Curtice (1985) dismissing the decline of class voting due to the misinterpretation of the meaning of the word. Kelley, MacAllister and Mughan (1985) instead propose an extended definition of class which includes elements of socio-demographics such as education and home-ownership. Sociological theories of voter behaviour, which focus on the group memberships of the individual, remain valid for parts of British society and deserve a place in contemporary explanations of voting behaviour. Under the sociological model of voter behaviour campaigns play a key role in mobilising social groups to vote. Although such groups are stable determinants of the *way* in which an individual votes, campaigning acts primarily as a conduit through which voter turnout can be encouraged. Campaigning also contacts key individuals within social groups such as the opinion leaders through which information can be relayed to other group members. In rare cases, campaigning can alter vote choice, although this is more likely in sections of the population who are on the peripheries of social groups.

Socio-psychological theories of voting – partisan identities

A sense of frustration with the explanatory value of sociological models of voting gave rise to a socio-psychological approach to voter behaviour in the USA in the 1950s. This approach

was developed at the University of Michigan (and as such is often referred to as the Michigan model), the seminal study of which was made by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) in *The American Voter*. Building on the mismatch between social group durability and vote fluctuations in sociological models, this new approach incorporated 'individualism, with a focus on the psychological meaning of group membership' (Harrop and Miller, 1987: 132) thereby avoiding the partial account of voter behaviour provided by authors such as Lazarsfeld et al. This socio-psychological model takes as its central element the idea that identifying with specific political parties 'is an attachment held widely through the… electorate with substantial influence on political cognitions, attitudes and behaviour' (Campbell et al., 1960:146). Voting decisions are based upon identifications with particular political parties which are formed through a process of political socialisation in childhood; this not only directly affects vote choice, but also the perception of politics. The model perceived citizens as largely passive in politics, with their identification forming not only part of their self-image (Harrop and Miller, 1987:131) but also as their guide in electoral choice and assisting in their interpretation of information. Partisan identifications indirectly impact vote choice by shaping the attitudes of the voters to various political constructs such as candidates, policies and the benefits they offer, but it can also play a role in directly informing vote choice for some.

These conclusions were based on empirical evidence from the American National Election Surveys between the late 1940s and late 1950s. Over this period they found repeated patterns of partisan identification - for example, at the 1948 presidential election 'what feeling there was seemed to be governed largely by antecedent attachments to one of the two major parties' (Campbell et al., 1960:532), and the repeated findings in different election years suggested party identification was key to understanding American voter behaviour. To understand the formation of partisan identifications Campbell et al. began by focusing upon those just reaching the legal voting age and found that they already had established partisan identifications. As such, partisan identification must begin before voting age and high correlations between reported partisan identifications and strengths of identifications of parents and children were found, suggesting that these preferences are formed as part of a process of socialisation within the family.

Under the socio-psychological model of voting, partisan identification displays 'persistent adherence and a resistance to contrary influence' (Campbell et al., 1960: 146), which indicate its durability, reflecting the sociological model. The authors demonstrate this durability of partisan identification in their study by examining presidential vote choice and

found that of 'those who can remember their first vote for president, two thirds still identify with the same party they first voted for' (Campbell et al., 1960:148). Generational change has the potential to affect the strength of partisan attachments, with Beck (1979) positing the idea of a three-generational cycle of realignment in which partisan identification declines over the space of three generations before realignment creates strong attachments once again. Campbell et al. (1960:149) acknowledge that 'not all members of the electorate form strong party attachment', and it is this section of the population where the potential effectiveness of short-term factors can be observed. This clear differentiation between the impact of short and long term factors is the key strength of socio-psychological models of voting behaviour. Whereas sociological models found it difficult to explain periods of change, socio-psychological models acknowledge not only that some people do not identify with political parties, but also that short-term fluctuations in voting are possible.

This theory of partisan identification translated well across to the UK, with Butler and Stokes (1969, 1974) providing the key evidence-based study of British electoral behaviour in *Political Change in Britain*. The authors found clear evidence of partisan identification in the UK with most voters perceiving themselves as 'supporters of a given party in a lasting sense' which provided them with a sense of a 'partisan self-image' (Butler and Stokes, 1969: 39). For Butler and Stokes, the family is central to the partisan identification an individual possesses during their lifetime. Such identifications have 'deep childhood roots' (Butler and Stokes, 1974: 49) and represent a social inheritance from parent to child. The family not only encompasses their own values, but also those of the class and culture to which they belong. There was clear empirical evidence, like the US studies, of stable and durable identification, with four-fifths of those questioned about their party support in 1963 claiming that they had always supported the same party. Dramatic events occurring when a voter entered the electorate, such as first time election of a majority Labour government in 1945 (McCallum and Readman, 1964) or the landslide victory of New Labour in 1997 (Norris, 1997a), may have a lasting influence on existing partisan cues and the individual may drop them altogether. Butler and Stokes also drew out key elements of the theory developed by Campbell et al. which were different in the UK environment, particularly the relationship between partisan identification and electoral preference. Whereas Campbell et al. saw American voters as keeping the two elements separate (i.e. it was possible to identify with one party yet vote for another), Butler and Stokes instead perceived the 'stability of partisan self-images in the presence of changing vote preferences' (1974: 43), which they attributed largely to

differences in the electoral context between the two nations, with American voters voting more often and at more levels of government.

The most fundamental challenge to the socio-psychological theories of voter behaviour has been the questioning of the continuing importance of partisan identification. Whereas socio-psychological theories present an image of a stable and peaceful political environment, in the 1960s, politics in the US was characterised by civil rights marches, protests against Vietnam and the landslide victory of Lyndon B Johnson in 1964 which saw the decline of Democrat support in the 'Solid South' (Grantham, 1988). In such a volatile and changeable political environment, it seems difficult to maintain the notion of the population's involvement in politics as 'remarkably innocent' (Converse, 1964:255). These upheavals indicated support for the assertion that 'voters are not fools' (Key, 1966:7); instead they are often engaged with and actively involved in the political and social environment. Nie, Verba and Petrocik (1976:52) re-examined American voter behaviour in *The Changing American Voter,* and found indications of a 'clear decline in the importance of party on all political levels' from Congress to Senate and even between elections. Partisan identification was declining in influence, with those identifying strongly with a political party dropping considerably from 38% in 1964 to 26% in 1974 (Nie et al., 1976: 49). More alarmingly perhaps was that by 1972 more than one in four voters voted for opposition candidates and, by adding this figure to independents, this meant that 51% of voters in 1972 were not guided by their supposed partisan identifications (Nie et al., 1976: 50).

This evidence of partisan dealignment in the USA has also been echoed in the UK. Like the USA, the UK went through a period of instability in the early 1970s, with an uncertain election outcome in 1970, massive swings in by-elections and the rise of smaller parties. Politics in the UK had become volatile and not as the peaceful socio-psychological model had envisaged. Crewe, Särlvik and Alt (1977:161) presented good evidence of a 'crumbling of partisanship' and offered three hypotheses which were supported by their investigations. The first was that the October 1974 election was an extraordinary election. It was the second in eight months and was called due to the failure of the minority Labour government elected in the February, with rapid dealignment particularly among Conservative partisans thereafter. Secondly, they examined whether this dealignment had occurred most amongst younger voters as suggested by *The Changing American Voter* which had indicated that younger voters did have weaker partisanship. The indications were that there had been a:

> ‘uniform partisan decline across the entire electorate - young, middle-aged and old - with no suggestion that it was particularly rapid amongst the young. It was everybody who changed - not just the new voters. Partisan decline would therefore appear to be attributable to a 'period effect' - to the prevailing social and political forces of the times’ (Crewe et al., 1977:164)

Finally they tested whether class dealignment had played a role in partisan dealignment (thereby linking sociological and socio-psychological theories of voting), with a clear long-term decline in the identification of classes with parties. They attributed this almost entirely to ‘the expansion of the Labour middle class, a growth uninterrupted even by Labour's 1970 defeat’ (Crewe et al., 1977: 169-70). Thus partisan dealignment was not only evident by the 1970s, but appeared to be speeding up. With this evidence that the important of partisanship in explaining voter behaviour has declined in value, this seriously undermines socio-psychological theories of voting.

However, once again, the notable word in the discussion of partisan dealignment is *decline*, not absence. As in the case of sociological models of voting, there is some evidence of continued partisan identification, even in contemporary Britain. Sanders found, for example, when comparing the results of the British Election Studies of 1964 and 2001 that in the latter year a ‘large majority’ (Sanders, 2004: 176) of participants classed themselves as identifying with a party. Although those identifying with the Conservatives and Labour combined had fallen 19 percentage points over the period, this coincided with the rise not only of nationalist parties (Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party) but also the Liberal Democrats. It is possible that the number of people identifying with the two largest political parties has dropped simply because there are more parties for people to identify with.

Under the socio-psychological model, the voting process for the individual depends on their partisan identification; a durable phenomenon. Like sociological models, campaigns are important under this school as a mobilising force. Partisan identifications are formed in childhood and remain durable throughout life, so it is unlikely (although not impossible) that campaigning will affect the way in which an individual votes. The funnel of causality is key to understanding the role of campaigning in affecting voter behaviour under the socio-psychological model. This construct incorporates elements of temporality and causality (Bartels, 2010) with partisan identification at the centre being influenced from one angle by socialisation. This identification affects voting behaviour, but campaigning also offers an

important way in which such behaviour can be altered. Fundamentally, campaigning is a provider of information, a way in which parties communicate with voters. Under the funnel of causality, campaigning affects the way in which voters perceive issues which in turn feeds into the voting decision.

Rational choice theories of voting – costs and benefits

In a radical departure from sociological and socio-psychological theories, the third model of voting proposes the idea of rationality as the basis of voting behaviour. These rational choice theories of voting were extended from economic theory, and the most notable author who applied such models to voting behaviour was Downs in *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). Downs imposed economic theories onto voting behaviour as he believed that the only way in which behaviour, including voting behaviour, could be explained or predicted was by imposing order (Downs, 1957:4). The first key difference between rational choice theories of voting behaviour and the two socially-driven models discussed already is that instead of looking at the means of the voting decision, rational choice takes the end as the starting point and works backwards to assess the most rational way of achieving this, excluding all psychological and group motivations.

Downs offers a utility based account of voting, with the voter as the centre of decision-making. There are two elements of the rational choice theory of voting – firstly the decision to vote, and secondly the choice of how to vote. Both are based on the formula:

$$pB>C$$

Where p is the probability of a vote being decisive, B is the benefits derived from voting and C is the costs associated with the vote. Rational choice theory offers an account of vote choice not based on any sociological foundation, but solely on voter rationality; where the benefits of the decision outweigh the costs, the individual will vote (McLean, 1986; Dunleavy 1991),

The costs associated with the choice to vote can be varied; they may be simple such as the cost of petrol to get to a polling station, or they may be the time taken to register to vote. Also entered into the equation are the benefits associated with choosing to vote, through which the voter enhances the possibility of their preferred party winning, thereby providing them with the best utility. The probability value increases the likelihood of an individual

voting if their chance of casting the decisive vote is greater – in that the closer the election, the more likely an individual is likely to vote.

These rational choice theories of voter behaviour have often proved to be controversial; with some theorists in the area believing that the theory fails empirically on the subject (see Brennan and Buchanan, 1984). The primary controversy of rational choice theories of electoral behaviour is in explaining voter turnout. People continue to turn out to vote even where their vote is not decisive and where costs may far outweigh the benefits. Fiorina even goes so far as to describe turnout as 'the paradox that ate rational choice theory' (1990:334). Arguments by authors such as Green and Shapiro (1994) centre on the p value of the equation – in most elections the value of p will be incredibly small as extremely few elections are won or lost by one vote. This presents a problem for rational choice theories of turnout, as they do not account for the apparently irrational behaviour of continuing to vote even when the voter may be aware that the p value is very small. In relation to the themes of this thesis, the reason that individuals still turn out to vote at all in very safe constituencies must be considered; the turnout figures there are typically lower than in more marginal constituencies (see chapter four), but a significant proportion of voters continue to turn out. In an attempt to address this paradox, many modifications have been proposed such as Aldrich's (1993) argument that turnout should not fall under the remit of rational choice theory at all as it is an activity that offers such low costs and benefits. This suggestion in itself is controversial, with Green and Shapiro (1994) questioning the validity of this argument, suggesting that Aldrich's argument undermines the overall value of rational choice theories of voter behaviour. Besides setting apart such a major facet of rational choice theories, the authors question Aldrich's reasoning behind presenting voting as a low cost and benefit activity, reasoning that African-Americans continued to vote through poll taxes during the Jim Crow era.

An alternative counter to these criticisms of rational choice theory's applicability to voter behaviour was Riker and Ordshook's (1968) proposed incorporation of a D value into Downs' original equation to represent the direct benefits of civic duty fulfilment derived from voting. In this modified equation, D represents an 'expressive benefit' (Brennan and Lomasky, 1993) of the voting decision in which an individual may vote because they feel it is their responsibility as a citizen or to demonstrate support for democracy. Despite these various efforts to counter criticisms of the failure of rational choice theory to explain voter turnout, Green and Shapiro (1994:48) remain unconvinced of what they term 'post-hoc theorising, slippery predications, and an inability to formulate a cogent null hypothesis'.

They observe insufficient matching between data and theory; a spillover from Downs' strategy of taking the ends and trying to find the most rational means to them. Instead authors try to examine 'what must be true of the data in order for some rational choice model of voter turnout to be valid' (Green and Shapiro 1994:50), making empirical facts fit theory by working backwards. They consider the incorporation of the D value insufficient to save rational choice theory as it still does not explain why turnout fluctuates.

In regards to vote choice, a rational voter will vote for whichever party 'he believes will provide him with more benefits than any other' (Downs, 1957:36). A central element of this choice is the voter's assessment of utility income. An individual must assess utility streams garnered from the existing administration's policies and compare these with the perceived utility of another party being in power at that time. This relies on the voter being aware of utility streams, but this aspect of the theory present certain difficulties; firstly in the voter gaining an accurate knowledge of a hypothetical situation of the rival party being in power, and secondly, as Downs acknowledges, identifying benefits which may not immediately be recognisable as originating from the government (such as water quality). To form vote choice, the voter can only factor in utility stream derived benefits they are aware of by Election Day. Campaigns play a key role in informing the voter not only of the government's performance, but also the potential utility stream from rival parties, thereby lowering the costs of making a voting decision. However, a basic failing of Downs' model of voting behaviour is the vagueness regarding the precise definition and remit of costs to be included in the equation, with Olson (1965:164) describing his understanding of costs as 'insignificant and imperceptible'. Other researchers have extended the definition of cost from the understandable (the time taken to travel to the polling station), to the absurd, with Goodin and Roberts (1975) distilling the cost of voting down to the very shoe leather used to walk into the polling station.

Rational choice theories of voter behaviour, as Green and Shapiro (1994) suggest, have often remained difficult to apply to hard empirical evidence. There is, however, some application of the theory to empirical data in the UK, specifically in the studies of the impact of marginality upon turnout by Denver and Hands (1974, 1985) and Mughan (1986). These researchers consistently found a relationship between how safe a constituency was and the proportion of the electorate voting, with marginal constituencies recording higher turnout than safer constituencies. Evidence has even been found at the national level, with Heath and Taylor (1999) discovering that national turnout was lower when the election result was a foregone conclusion. Arguably this is evidence of rational choice theories of voter

behaviour, with the probability of casting the decisive vote greater the more marginal the constituency. Despite this suggestion of voter rationality in the UK, the picture is a complex one; US authors such as Matsusaka (1993) deny the link and question the appropriateness of surmising individual voter intentions from the constituency level. In the UK context, Pattie and Johnston (1998a), after constructing models to test the relationship between marginality and turnout in the UK between 1959 and 1997, found no clear link, although initial correlations did suggest voter rationality. However the level of measurement would appear to play a key part in the explanatory power of rational choices theories of voter behaviour. Whereas articles such as Denver and Hands (1974, 1985) have examined the relationship between marginality and turnout from an aggregate level and found positive results, Pattie and Johnston (1998a) instead used individual-level data (sourced from the BES) and found no relationship. It would appear that there is some ecological fallacy (Robinson, 1950) in the relationship; people react rationally to the local context collectively, but not individually. In an update of their earlier work, Pattie and Johnston (2005) addressed this apparent paradox, discovering that if individuals were divided into intentional and accidental abstainers, there was an observable relationship between marginality and turnout in the UK. The message is a little mixed in the case of the explanatory value of rational choice theories of voter behaviour; however, there is some evidence that marginality does indeed have an effect upon turnout in the UK.

Of the three schools examined here, campaigns are of the most importance to voter behaviour under rational choice theory. Campaigns serve a vital role of providing information which not only mobilises but can play an active role in affecting vote choice. Campaigns inform the constituency population of the closeness of the election either by explicitly referring to it or implicitly through the quantity of campaigning. Such campaigning clarifies the p value to enter into the voting equation, and will boost turnout by indicating how likely a vote is to be the deciding one. The information provided also enters calculations of the cost and benefits associated with voting, with campaigning bringing the information directly to the voter and thereby reducing the associated costs of obtaining it. Campaigning is also important under this model in affecting the vote choice as a source of information through which voters can calculate their utility streams and consider which party offers them the greatest benefits.

A theoretical approach to campaigning

While it is possible to observe some evidence of the three main schools in contemporary UK voting behaviour, this thesis adopts an approach based on rational choice and sociological models. What is proposed is an acknowledgement that *different people vote for different reasons*, and no single theory offers a comprehensive explanation: while some people may vote according to their group memberships, others may vote according to the expected benefits received. By combining these two methods as much voter behaviour can be accounted for as possible, with evidence for the presence of both in the UK.

There are two fundamental tensions between sociological and rational choice models of voter behaviour; the ability to account for change and the role of the individual. Rational choice theories can easily account for changes in voter behaviour, with the primary motivations behind voting being their own interests. In contrast, sociological theories represent an account of voter behaviour which is slow to change, with social groups (and therefore the voting behaviour of members) changing more slowly over time. There is also tension between the two theories in the role of the individual. In rational choice theories the individual is the originator of voter behaviour, voting for their own interests and preferences, seeking the best utility outcome. Sociological theories are in contrast based on the interests of groups, although individuals can play important roles within them, particularly in regards to opinion leaders. While there is some continued evidence of partisan identification influencing UK voter behaviour, albeit lessened, this school is not adopted in the approach of this thesis.

Primarily the approach taken here is informed by rational choice theories of voter behaviour, being intrinsically linked with the key theme of marginality. This theory offers a convincing (and explicit) account of how marginality affects the way in which people vote; the more marginal the constituency, the higher the turnout is likely to be as the likelihood of casting the deciding vote is higher. Drawing links from theory to campaigning is simple; constituency populations are consumers of the political information which local campaigning provides, using this information to make decisions not only to vote but also how to vote. This ability for rational choice theories to account for both turnout and changes in vote share fits well with the two dimensions of local electoral outcomes adopted in this thesis. Elements of the sociological theory are also adopted, particularly as there is a continued (although diminished) tradition of class voting in the UK.

Do local campaigns matter?

Understanding the potential effects of campaigning on voter behaviour is vital. After all, the thesis hypothesis is founded on the assumption that campaigning is so important in affecting voter behaviour that its *absence* can in fact be *harmful* to turnout and vote share. The question of whether campaigns matter depends largely upon the definition of what it means to 'matter'. Holbrook (1996:18) argues that campaigns are often concluded to be irrelevant because 'too often it is assumed that for campaigns to be effective, they have to determine the election outcomes'. Instead campaigns can be effective in alternative ways; from the timing, to the level at which the campaign is examined. Timing matters when it comes to campaigns, with an election campaign being a limited period of activity during which political parties attempt to gain decision-making power. Formally, campaigning is a restricted period of time – for example, in the UK, the election campaign (Great Britain, 2000) refers to the short campaign which is the period of time (most usually six or seven weeks) between the dissolution of Parliament by the Queen, requested by the incumbent Prime Minister, and the day of the Election. In practice many political parties may maintain almost constant campaigning, particularly in marginal constituencies, as indicated by Lord Ashcroft's canvassing prior to the 2010 general election (Cutts et al., 2012) which lasted three years.

Secondly, the level at which the campaign is studied also matters. Although national election campaigns are run focusing on the party leaders and national policies, it is campaigning at the local level that is the focus of this thesis. After all, a UK political party cannot win an election without winning constituencies, and in a First Past The Post electoral system such as the UK, the composition of the House of Commons produced by an election is not based upon national vote shares (unlike in proportional systems; see Lijphart, 1995) but on how many constituencies are won by each party. Constituencies are central in deciding the final election result, offering good grounds for concentrating on campaigning at the local level; this thesis takes this up by focusing on the harmful effects of a lack of such campaigning.

Campaigns and information theory

Information is key to an effective democracy (Lipsitz, 2004) and the role of campaigning in constituencies is to provide information to voters, enabling them to decide whether to vote and also how to vote (Bartels, 1993 and Popkin, 1994 among others). Drawing here on Holbrook's (1996) impression driven model of voter information reception and Orbell's

discussion of information theory (1970), campaigns are information providers, a theory which has its origins in rational choice theories of voting. By combining campaigning and information theory I follow the example of Nadeau et al. (2008: 242). Yet this thesis goes further by specifically reconciling local campaigning and information theory, as well as explicitly discussing the impact of voter behaviour theory models and how they might interact with information theory.

The local campaign is a method of lowering the cost of voting by providing information about party candidates and the benefits their successful election would offer the rational voter. According to rational choice theory, a vote will be cast if the costs are outweighed by the benefits, supporting the party that offers the best utility outcome. Voters are informed of the positions of each party primarily via the information that campaigns provide on candidates, policies and the local context. The individual 'casts his vote for the party he believes will provide him with more benefits than any other' (Downs, 1957: 36) and it is the role of campaigning to act as a source of information through which the calculation of expected benefits and the party differential can be made. Such information is presented with the aim of affecting both the individual's choice to vote and vote choice, reflecting the dual dimensions of electoral outcomes used in this thesis. As such, the local campaign not only enhances turnout by reducing the costs of voting, but also influences vote choice by presenting party positions and enabling a utility calculation to be performed.

However, the origin of this theory in rational choice models of voting does not mean that understanding campaigns as sources of information should be limited to rational choice theories of voter behaviour. Rather the information that campaigns provide plays a *different* role for those members of the constituency population who vote according to their group memberships; in some cases vote choice may be altered, but in most cases the campaign offers information about the local context, encouraging turnout. In keeping with the resolution of two models of voter behaviour in this thesis, I mirror this by extending information theory from explaining how campaigns affect rational voters to consider the impact of campaigning on voters as perceived by the second model.

Sociological theories of voting may incorporate the idea of campaigns as sources of information in two ways – firstly that campaigns offer information on the local context and candidates (John and Brannan, 2006) which *mobilises* social groups, and secondly that in some cases campaigns can *alter* vote choice. Berelson et al. (1954: 252) found that 'the more exposure to the campaign in the mass media, the more interested voters become and the more strongly they come to feel about their candidate': a sign that campaigns act as sources

of information which raise voter interest. This may in turn raise participation, as if a voter feels strongly about their candidate, they are more likely to turn out and vote to show their support. The effects of campaign activity may be dispersed from an originator (a sender who has come into contact with campaign activity) through their social groups. Membership of such groups affects the voting behaviour of the individual and this occurs because the group enables social interaction and the formation of group cues.

Conversion in sociological theories of voting is unlikely, as vote choice is ordained by the social strata to which an individual voter belongs and to change this is a time-consuming prospect. On Election Day in the UK, parties conduct last minute campaigning such as 'knocking up' voters (telephoning or visiting to ensure they have voted) or delivering 'Good Morning' leaflets in order to 'stiffen the resolve of the party's voters' (Johnston et al., 2012: 1174) emphasising the mobilising aspect of local campaigns. That is not to say that conversion is impossible in sociological models of voting, just that it is not the norm: Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) found 9% of voters changed their positions during the 1940 presidential campaign. A campaign can therefore both influence and potentially alter vote choice through the transmission of information via social groups.

Information campaigns in action

Campaigns generate large amounts of information, and for a voter to escape the campaign in its entirety – whether they watch the news, pick up the leaflet on the doormat or speak to canvassers – would be difficult[6]. Holbrook (1996:45) provides a clear example of the extent to which voters are exposed to the presidential campaign, with the American National Election Studies Cumulative Data File finding that between 1952 and 1992, 'more than 97% of all voters report some exposure to the…campaign'. This is echoed by the studies of UK constituency campaigning using data from the British Electoral Study, such as Johnston et al. (2012: 1169) who found that during the 2010 election campaign, 27 percent of respondents were contacted by a single party, with 16 percent contacted by all three.

Most local campaign activities can be classed as sources of information, from leaflets pushed through front doors, to posters in windows and canvassers (Norris et al., 1999). Yet one potential aspect of the local campaign has remained unstudied in the UK context; leader

[6] Although the quantity of information varies between seats according to marginality, with marginal seats likely to be bombarding voters with the most information. However, even in the very safest seats there would still be some exposure to local campaign information as will be seen in chapter four.

visits. These visits made by party leaders to constituencies bring both local and national publicity, and at the local level are likely to feature in local newspapers and news programmes. They draw attention to the local campaign and offer information on party policies and the local candidate that the leader is visiting. They can offer a variety of information to voters, depending on what the purpose of the visit is, from launching a new policy, to professing commitment to a key local business area: all offer information about where the party stands on key issues, particularly those relevant to the local community. Leaving aside what the messages of the parties during these visits are, the symbolism of the leader of the national party (a potential Prime Minster) choosing to visit a constituency construes a certain benefit to that party's local candidate. As Carty and Eagles (2005) hypothesised in their examination of leader visits during the 2000 Canadian federal election, such visits bestow certain kudos on the local candidate, implying and informing the local population that they have the leader's support. This in turn could enhance the party vote share for this party as an MP favoured by the party leader may be able to obtain more benefits for their constituency.

A key justification for perceiving local campaigns as sources of information for voters comes from the variety of channels through which this information can be disseminated to voters and the constant evolution of new contacting methods. If campaigns did not matter as information sources, then it makes no sense why parties spend time and money on utilising these new technologies. Local campaigns are constantly adapting to the modern political environment, with the twentieth century witnessing the introduction of television and the expansion of mass media. Over the past decade, the popularity of social networking sites has exploded, and they have in many cases been adopted by political parties to provide information to voters, notably in the skilled use of social media in the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States in 2008. At the 2010 UK general election candidates for the three largest parties took advantage of these new platforms, with 42% having a Facebook page and 34% using Twitter (Wring and Ward, 2010: 813). While the technology is new, the point of the message is an old one; to disseminate information to the voter and make them aware of the potential benefits on offer.

If all campaigns operate as providers of information to voters, then it does not naturally follow that local campaigns are effective by themselves. Perhaps the national election campaign has become the most important element in influencing voting decisions, at the expense of the local campaign. It is not only researchers (Butler and Rose, 1960, Rosenbaum,

1997) who have argued the precedence of the national campaign, but even some MPs who have argued that

> 'the local campaign is becoming an arcane irrelevance, a background noise which distracts from the decisive national campaign coming over the box. When canvassers call in the day they deposit rubbish in empty houses. At night they interrupt the election by dragging people from the TV to the door.'
>
> Austin Mitchell MP 1987 (quoted in Butler and Kavanagh 1988: 237)

Some researchers argue that the general election is no longer a series of local campaigns - rather that is has become 'an increasingly cohesive and homogenous countrywide contest between national political parties' (Rosenbaum, 1997: 224), and controlled as such. In fact, 'reactions to the activities of leaders and parties at Westminster' (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997: 210) are likely to negate any effects of campaigns at constituency level, making them irrelevant. Constituency campaigns are now 'anachronistic local rites… thought not to have any real bearing on results' (Butler and Kavanagh, 1988: 211). In the case of the 1997 election, Butler and Kavanagh (1997:312) concluded that the performance of Labour in constituencies which the party targeted were 'very similar' to other constituencies where Labour were fighting the Conservatives. The spread of modern technology has also eliminated many of the barriers between national and local campaigns. Over recent decades technological advances and increased access to this new technology has meant that the national campaign has been able to reach voters as it never could before. Also technology has made significant changes to party campaign strategy by enabling the use of instruments such as telephone canvassing, voter databases and text messaging voters (see Ballinger, 2002).

These conclusions regarding the irrelevance of the local campaign have often fallen into the trap of those criticising the theoretical models of voter behaviour; namely that there is a misunderstanding over what an effective campaign is. An effective local campaign does not imply, as Butler and Rose (1960) suggest, a direct effect upon the national result. Instead local campaigns affect local outcomes and this does not only means seat turnover, but also increasing vote share and turnout. In extreme cases local campaigning may indeed affect the national result if enough constituencies change hands. When considering the impact of technology in removing the barriers between local and national campaigns, instead of making local campaigns irrelevant extensions of the national campaign, local campaigns are

now better able to reach voters. Political parties and candidates have capitalised on the use of new media in contacting voters in the contemporary electoral environment and instead of being irrelevant, local campaigns have proved they are up to the challenge of the modern political environment.

Levels of interest and information scores

Voters are not equally receptive to the information offered by local campaigns; their level of interest in politics impacts the ability for campaigning to affect their behaviour. As Orbell (1970) suggests, all individuals build up a store of information on politics, and it is this store of information that restricts the effectiveness of campaign activity. Populations can be divided into three categories of political interest: low, mid-range and high, with campaign activity affecting all three categories in different ways. Those with a high interest in politics have firm ideas about whether they are going to vote, and if so, for whom. Any information they receive from campaign activity (whether by their preferred party or another) is very unlikely to alter their vote choice, as their existing opinions insulate them from such information (Converse, 1962). Their decision to vote in the first place can, however be affected by campaigning; for this group, a party's campaign focuses on encouraging them to *turn out* and vote for their party. Those with a low interest store are least likely to vote, with any information provided to them by the campaign unlikely to encourage them to turn out to vote. However, unlike those with high levels of political interest, those with a lower level of interest *are* susceptible to information on which party to vote for provided as part of the campaign, as long as the cues are 'clear and unambiguous' (Orbell, 1970: 334). Despite this, these low-interest voters tend to receive little information targeted at them during the campaign.

The remaining mid-range group has comparatively low levels of political information with 'which to defend itself against the persuasiveness' (Cox, 1969: 181) of campaign materials when contrasted with the high interest group, but comparatively higher levels of interest than the low level group, making them more susceptible to information provided by the campaign. As Cox suggests 'defection will be influenced by any bias inherent in…information' (Cox, 1969:163); and the information contained in campaign activity, whether it is a party leaflet or a poster in a window will be biased in favour of the party producing it. The large amounts of inherently biased information provided by campaign

activity both encourage the reinforcement of the behaviour of individuals in the mid-range who already favour a party (such as through group membership) and converting those who do not (rational choice voters). In an empirical application of levels of knowledge and the role of campaigning as an information provider, Nadeau et al. (2008) examined the 1997 Canadian Election Study. By combining both general and campaign specific information levels and applying these to the survey, the authors were able to conclude in an empirical setting that levels of knowledge did have an impact on voters, particularly the mid-range interest group.

During the campaign

Elections are unpredictable; if they were not, then it would be possible to observe the final result throughout the campaign period. It is persuasive to suggest that campaigns do have an effect because campaign events cause fluctuations in the polls. These fluctuations are combined with an equilibrium level of support for a candidate in which 'forces exogenous to the campaign...push (or pull) the level of candidate support to a certain 'natural' outcome' (Holbrook, 1996: 48-9) – this is not a deterministic conception of voting behaviour, but rather that campaigns are capable of pulling voters away from their equilibrium, and if the campaign is effective enough, the equilibrium will be broken. Voters start the campaign with a certain impression of the candidates based on their existing political knowledge. The voters update their evaluations of the candidates as events unfold (Lodge, McGraw and Stroh, 1989: 401) and new information is made available over the course of the campaign. If there is a great deal of negative publicity for one candidate, the voter's perception of them will go down. This works with both the sociological and rational choice theories of voter behaviour, the former of which posits the impression of the candidate as based on group membership with the information provided by campaigning adding to it. In some cases the equilibrium can be broken and group memberships voted against.

Impression driven accounts fail to sufficiently address the varying levels of political interest and knowledge individuals possess. A key assumption with these theories is that information is valuable to voters, whereas in reality, information is more valuable to some than others. In a safe seat, the campaign effort by all parties is likely to be minimal, so a low interest voter (as well as those in the mid-range) will not receive sufficient information to add to their

events tally, and therefore the equilibrium is very unlikely to change. Theoretically the equilibrium in a safe seat could be changed by providing knowledge to such voters.

Information theory would therefore appear to be not only effective in explaining the impact of local campaigning on voter behaviour, but also in explaining the potential to affect voting decisions during the campaign. The information that a local campaign provides acts as a reduction of the costs of the voting decision for some voters and a mobilising force for those with group memberships. However, campaigning as a whole is not without controversy; one important argument against the importance of campaigning is the influence of electoral context on the local results, particularly the track record of the incumbent government. This argument originates from theories on retrospective voting developed by Key in *The Responsible Electorate* (1966) and Fiorina in *Retrospective Voting in American national elections* (1981). These works do not deny that campaigning does have important mobilisation and conversionary effects, but consider that

> 'other influences doubtless outweigh the campaign in the determination of the vote. As voters mark their ballots they may have in their minds impressions of the last television spectacular of the campaign, but more important, they have in their minds recollections of their experiences of the past four years' (Key, 1966:9).

Voters analyse their own policy preferences and how well the incumbent administration has fulfilled them, retrospectively linking partly back to rational choice theories of utility stream maximisation. This approach offers a rather deterministic view that in comparison to the electoral contest and the record of the government, campaigns can make little, if any, difference to the election result.

Also linked with such individual-level evaluations of performance are theories of issue voting which link back to the early studies of voter behaviour; after all it was Lazarsfeld et al.'s (1944) original purpose to discover the impact of issues on vote choice and the subsequent contradictory findings which resulted in *The People's Choice*. Even in the 1960s, Converse (1964) questioned the ability of voters to deal with issues and linking them to candidates. However, increasing evidence from the USA and UK from the late 1960s onwards has reawakened the interest in issue voting.

Nie et al. (1976) found clear evidence of volatility in the electorate and a tendency to vote on political issues which they attributed to the decline in partisan identification. Issue voting has also been observed in the UK, with Franklin (1985) linking partisan dealignment with issue voting by suggesting

> 'the decline in the class basis of voting choice amounts to a reduction in the strength of forces that previously inhibited volatility and self-expression. That consequence has been to open the way to choice between parties based on issue preferences rather than class loyalty' (Franklin, 1985: 176)

A marginally stronger adaptation of this argument was offered by King (1998) who gave a rather damning indictment of the effectiveness of *both* national and local campaigning in the 1997 UK General Election:

> The politicians, as they always do on these occasions, puffed, panted, and rushed about the country. They stretched every sinew and strained every nerve. They gave speeches, they gave interviews, they gave their all. No camera angle was neglected, no photo opportunity was missed. At times the politicians resembled those manic characters in the jerky, speeded-up film comedies of the 1920s. But nothing happened. The audience, for whose benefit all these entertainments were laid on, remained almost completely inert. Scarcely a cough or a sneeze could be heard from the pit. (King, 1998:179)

He concluded that 'despite the efforts of the parties, all the evidence suggests that the campaign was largely irrelevant' (King, 1998:179); that voters had already made up their mind to oust the Conservative administration primarily due to their poor economic management. This had been embodied most clearly by Black Wednesday in September 1992 and the withdrawal of the Pound from the Exchange Rate Mechanism. At the same time, the reinvigoration of the Labour Party under the leadership of Tony Blair meant that a Labour victory in 1997 was inevitable. Therefore all forms of campaigning were irrelevant: Labour would have won anyway. King was not alone – Bartle, Crewe and Gosschalk (1998:191) also argued that the Conservative defeat was determined years before the election took place in 1997.

These conclusions are not without controversy and I do not believe that they pose a serious risk to the importance of local campaigning. Studies that suggest local campaigning does not matter are flawed; most campaigns have the ability to influence how and whether an individual votes, particularly when they fall into the mid-range level of political interest. Furthermore, such critical studies have often bolstered their arguments by suggesting that campaigning does not matter because of the timing of the voting decisions leading to the predictability of the result. By focusing either on aggregate factors or on Election Day decisions, they fail to sufficiently analyse or understand the factors behind this decision. Even if arguments regarding the importance of context held in 1997, it does not follow that this should be the case for all elections. 1997 was after all a critical election (Key, 1955; Norris and Evans, 1999) and may have been a special case where contextual factors did play a larger role than usual in determining the election result. It is also difficult to generalise from these conclusions as they are so specific to particular elections that it is impossible to conclude that context operates as the sole explanatory factor in determining election results. Secondly, there is consistent empirically tested evidence that local campaigns are effective, even at the 1997 election (see Whiteley and Seyd, 2003). Quite simply, to conclude that campaigns, particularly local ones, are irrelevant in the UK goes against empirical evidence.

Campaign effectiveness

For a campaign to be effective it should impact either voter turnout or party vote share (or even both) through its role as a source of conversion and mobilisation. In terms of aggregate evidence, there is also a good amount of evidence from the USA that campaigning has an effect on vote share (see Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1992; Patterson and Caldeira, 1984 for example). Perhaps the most notable are Jacobson's series of studies (1978, 1980 etc.) on the relative effectiveness of campaign expenditure between incumbent and opposition candidates. There was clear evidence that spending, even when controlling for other factors, has 'an independent effect' (Jacobson, 1980:162) on the success of candidates, particularly opposition candidates whose spending was able to bridge the gap of voter familiarity. Evidence from the USA (Cutright and Rossi, 1958; Kramer, 1970; Crotty, 1971; and Frendreis, Gibson and Vertz, 1990) has demonstrated that campaigns both at the state and federal level are also significant in influencing turnout, although their results have been modest. Gerber and Green's study (2000), which was party neutral and focused purely on

examining how various methods of campaigning affected turnout, provides good evidence that face-to-face campaigning is particularly effective in raising turnout.

For much of the twentieth century, academic researchers, particularly in the UK (Butler and Kavanagh, 1988), dismissed local campaigning as ineffective and irrelevant. The earliest studies which attempted to test these assumptions and investigate whether campaigning is effective were highly localised case studies of campaigns, with Holt and Turner (1968) and Bochel and Denver (1971, 1972) being among the first. Holt and Turner's focused study on the campaign experiences of Labour and the Conservatives in the marginal London constituency of Barons Court at both the 1964 and the 1966 general elections produced some early indications that campaigning was effective. They discovered that 'organization was an important influence in the 1964 election in Baron's Court' (Holt and Turner, 1968:298) particularly canvassing conducted by Labour. Bochel and Denver went further in their study of a Labour campaign in a Dundee ward during the municipal elections of 1970, examining the impact of canvassing upon both turnout and vote share. They found, like Holt and Turner, that canvassing was effective in raising Labour vote share, but they also found that canvassing boosted turnout; with the two symptomatic of the other – turnout was increased by an increase in the numbers of Labour voters going to the polls. They conclude that 'good organization and relevant activity can increase the turnout of identified supporters' (Bochel and Denver, 1971:268), although they do concede that the scope for the impact of local campaigning is likely to be smaller at a general election.

From these case studies of local campaigns in the UK, and also on the back of aggregate evidence from the USA, empirical evidence was produced that suggested campaigning (most often operationalised as canvassing) had been effective in raising vote share and also turnout. In the late 1980s, as a challenge to the Nuffield studies, a group of researchers began a series of aggregate investigations into campaign effectiveness which continue today. The authors (among others Whiteley and Seyd, 1994) argued that the evidence from the US in regards to campaign effectiveness was good grounds for a similar effect in the UK, particularly as the UK electoral system, with its short campaign period and relatively high levels of partisanship, suggested the potential of campaign effectiveness may be greater than in the USA. Three main groups of authors in this 'new orthodoxy' (Pattie and Johnston 2003b: 382) emerged: Pattie and Johnston who examined campaign expenditure; Denver and Hands who examined campaign activity data from party agents; and Seyd and Whiteley who used campaign activity data from their studies of party members. As time has progressed and the

amounts of data have increased, longitudinal studies (of which this thesis is one) have also been possible. These studies have tested the effectiveness of campaigning in detail, relying not on correlations, but fully-specified and controlled models which in themselves have evolved over time.

Such research has repeatedly found a strong link between campaign spending and the impact upon vote share, but this has not always applied to all parties. While Pattie and Johnston (2003b) found that Labour and the Liberal Democrats spent according to a rational pattern, with more marginal constituencies seeing higher spending, the Conservatives employed a less strategic approach to constituency campaigning prior to 2001. The party was limited in this ability to rationally apply electoral strategy due to the strong local parties in the party's safer constituencies (this has been observed in other works, see Denver and Hands, 1997a). Drawing on the influence from Jacobson's studies of campaign expenditure effectiveness in the USA, UK researchers (Johnston 1987; Johnston and Pattie, 1995; 1997) have consistently found that where a party spends more, they do better. For example, Johnston and Pattie's 1995 study of the effectiveness of expenditure found that for every 1 percentage point increase in the legal maximum spent by Conservative candidates in 1987, Conservative vote share was boosted by .112 points. These UK studies have even given rise to the examination of the effectiveness of campaign expenditure in Canadian elections, with Carty and Eagles also finding a positive relationship (1999:82).

There is also good evidence of campaign effectiveness from studies which examine campaign activity. Whiteley and Seyd have consistently found support for the effectiveness of constituency campaigning through their surveys of party members. In their (1994) study of campaigning at the 1987 election, local activism (measured through agent surveys) significantly and positively affected Labour vote share in 1987, even when including a particularly stringent control variable. Similarly, when contrasting the electoral effectiveness of the Liberal Democrat campaign of 1997 (Whiteley and Seyd 2003), they discovered that a combination of the member data and spending data meant that Liberal Democrat campaigning had a strong impact on the votes received – even bigger than their comparative models of Labour and the Conservatives.

These researchers have also pulled out the relative impact of campaigning by other parties on each other's vote share, with Pattie and Johnston (1995: 974) finding that the more a party campaigned, the better it did in constituencies at the expense of its rivals. Fieldhouse and Cutts (2008: 388) also find evidence for this in their observation that in 2005 'by far the most

effective campaign in damaging opponents proved to be the Conservative campaign'. Typically when constructing models to examine the effectiveness of multiple parties, researchers enter campaign measures for all parties into the same model so these effects can be controlled for.

In contrast, the impact of campaigning upon turnout has been relatively neglected in the UK, which is largely symptomatic of the origin of the upswing in attention on constituency campaigning. The focus on vote share was partially a reaction to the dismissal of campaigning by the Nuffield studies as 'having no real impact upon election results' (Butler and Kavanagh, 1974:240), and to test whether this assumption was valid, researchers focused on party performance variables. This means that studies of turnout in the UK are not as numerous as studies of vote share, but those that have tested the relationship have largely found evidence that campaigning also impacts turnout. Fisher and Denver (2009) examined the effect of campaigning on turnout over the 1992 to 2005 period, dividing their campaign methods into two separate indices for traditional methods (posters, leaflets, doorstep canvassing) and modern (which includes telephone canvassing). The full differences of effectiveness between the two methods of campaigning will be examined in detail later in this section, but they discovered that from 1992 until 2001 'traditional methods of campaigning have a positive effect on turnout' (Fisher and Denver, 2009: 208) even when controlling for previous turnout. In 1992 alone campaigning overall raised turnout by 2.9%.

Despite this revival of interest in constituency campaigning, the subject area is continually evolving, with new campaign techniques being utilised by parties and the introduction of the internet. Yet few studies have examined trends over multiple elections, with Fisher and Denver (2009), Pattie and Johnston (2009b) and Denver et al. (2004) being notable exceptions; this thesis, by covering six elections, extends the study to multiple elections and the potential of campaigning to affect local outcomes. There is also clear empirical evidence that campaigning has the ability to affect vote choice and voter turnout, yet comparatively few studies examine both dimensions in tandem, with the longitudinal studies mentioned above being notable exceptions. Building on this evidence, this thesis concentrates on the impact of a lack of campaigning on both dimensions across the period. The evidence presented above has given a sense of the impact that local campaigns can have on electoral outcomes, but the true effectiveness of local campaigning is a far more complex matter than presented above.

Campaigning and incumbency

The most notable examinations of the relative campaign effectiveness of incumbent and opposition on candidates are Jacobson's studies on campaign expenditure in the USA (Jacobson ,1978; 1980; 1987; 2006). His 1978 study discovered that incumbent candidates do worse in the polls the more they spend, whereas challenger (non-incumbent) spending is far more effective in altering vote share. This factor is attributed to voter familiarity of different candidates, with the incumbent beginning from a strong position; they are likely to be recognised by some voters and their positions on various policies would be available to the voters by reviewing their period in office. The campaign offers 'relatively little additional impact' (Jacobson, 1978:37) for incumbent candidates This is in contrast to the experience of non-incumbent candidates who start at a comparative disadvantage as not only they, but also their views, are not widely known. The campaign for them represents 'the only means for grabbing the attention of voters' (Jacobson, 1980: 146) and for publicising their views.

Even when building upon these initial findings in a later study, which includes control variables alongside the incorporation of various elements of candidate familiarity, he still finds that expenditure by opposition candidates has a 'large effect' (Jacobson, 1987:49) on their vote share, in contrast to smaller gains by incumbents. Yet Jacobson's findings have not been without controversy; Green and Krasno (1988) have in particular argued that his conclusions are incorrect as incumbents can use spending to defend themselves successfully. By examining spend per vote instead, Green and Krasno (1990) conclude that the reward of spending by incumbents is 'both considerable and on par with the yield from challenger expenditure' (Green and Krasno, 1990:363) which would appear to reject Jacobson's argument. These studies have been conducted in the American context where attracting funding from private donors is central to many candidate campaigns (Alexander, 1991); this in itself may play a large role in how well they do at election time and engenders a discussion of how able incumbents and challengers are in attracting funding.

The impact of incumbency upon campaigning in the UK has also been considered, despite the differing campaign spending contexts. Drawing on Jacobson's ideas of incumbency creating voter familiarity (Norris, Vallance, and Lovenduski, 1992; Norton and Wood, 1990; Pattie, Fieldhouse, and Johnston, 1994), incumbent MPs can use the campaign to present their political positions and voting record to local voters. Johnston and Pattie's findings

(1995; 2008) on the subject of incumbency and constituency spending do appear to support Jacobson's conclusions in the UK context, finding not only that spending increases the incumbent's vote share and diminishes that of their rivals, but also that challenger spending had a strong effect on that party's vote share (Pattie, Johnston and Fieldhouse, 1995: 975).

These studies provide persuasive evidence that the effectiveness of campaigning differs according to whether the candidate is the incumbent or the opponent, and to take this into account incumbency plays a central role in measuring campaigning in this thesis. Chapter five details the measure utilised to identify low level campaigning in the UK; this measure is based around activity quartiles as used by Denver, Hands and McAllister (2004). While their model gave candidates scores according to which quartile their campaign activity fell into, it was based on *all* candidate incumbencies. Yet this chapter has shown evidence that campaign effectiveness is altered according to whether the candidate is the incumbent, with challengers running more successful campaigns. This thesis builds on Denver et al.'s work by firstly identifying the incumbency of candidates before producing specific quartile measures for both incumbents and opponents.

Campaigns and technology

Various methods of campaigning vary in their effectiveness. As technology has advanced, new techniques have been introduced; from the more traditional methods of doorstep canvassing or leaflet distribution (Gerber and Green, 2000) to modern techniques such as telephone canvassing and the use of computers (Fisher and Denver, 2009). Recent examinations of constituency campaigning have been able to examine the evolution of such techniques (Pattie and Johnston, 2009b, Fisher and Denver, 2009) and have begun to compare their relative effectiveness.

Gerber and Green (2000) conducted an experimental Get Out the Vote (GOTV) study into the comparative effectiveness of telephone and doorstep canvassing with campaign neutral messages. Their conclusions suggest that the face-to-face contact offered by doorstep canvassing was significantly more effective than more impersonal telephone calls and leaflet distribution. Drawing on information theory, if the purpose of campaigns is to provide information to the voters, then perhaps such face-to-face contact is important for an individual to retain information. The study concluded (Gerber and Green, 2000:611) that for

every $8 spent canvassing on the doorstep, one more voter will turn out, yet it would cost $40 to produce the same effect with leaflets. Although the authors were uncertain why doorstep canvassing should be more effective, human contact and social interaction may make information more memorable. Leaflets may not be personal enough, and the cost of processing the information it contains is fairly high. After all, the individual has to consciously pick it up, read it and understand the information that it contains. However, with canvassing, if the individual answers the door the canvasser provides them with information and they are able to ask questions or for clarification. Whilst they can shut the door in the canvasser's face, just as they can put the leaflet in the bin, the transmission of information at the door appears to be far more immediate. An out-of-state phone bank decreased turnout in by 1%: perhaps the individuals did not like being encouraged to vote by someone not from the local area, or the timing of the calls was not best placed to make contact. The telephone also removes the personal impact of face to face contact, so while information may be being transmitted, the processing of the information by the individual is less effective.

These conclusions have been reinforced by UK studies into relative campaign technique effectiveness by studies at both the aggregate (Fisher and Denver, 2009) and individual (Pattie and Johnston, 2003a) level. Whereas doorstep canvassing is often seen as an effective way of influencing party vote share and turnout, telephone canvassing has so far yielded 'little measurable effect' (Pattie and Johnston, 2003a: 322), with the authors suggesting that it is too intrusive and reminiscent of cold-calling. Fisher and Denver's 2009 study into modern and traditional modes of campaigning between 1992 and 2005 conclude that 'modern campaign techniques seem to be regularly less effective than traditional ones' (Fisher and Denver, 2009: 207) and only appeared to have an impact for Labour, echoing the earlier findings of Pattie and Johnston. Their conclusions are not consistent across the parties; for the Conservatives, traditional methods were significantly related to vote share only at the 1997 election and modern methods were insignificant for all years. In contrast, Labour's traditional techniques were significant in three of the four elections under study, whereas modern campaign techniques were significantly related to Labour vote share in 1992 and 1997 (but the effects of modern campaign techniques were greater). The Liberal Democrats saw a significant relationship between traditional methods at every election, but no such relationship for modern techniques.

These repeated findings of the relative ineffectiveness of telephone canvassing compared to doorstep canvassing suggest that the impersonal nature of modern techniques might be the

root of the problem. This is despite a trend towards a decline in the scale of direct campaign activity in recent years due to the technologisation of campaigning, and the use of mass media superseding personal contact. Such technologisation has coincided with a general trend towards lower turnout, and Gerber and Green (2000:661) suggest that 'falling rates of turnout reflect a decline in face to face contact', in that personal contact during campaigning encourages individuals to vote. Some even more recent studies (Baxter and Marcella, 2012) examine the use of social media, although pinning down the precise effectiveness of such techniques is difficult, particularly when the focus of interest is at the local level. In the lead up to the 2010 general election, there was much discussion that Twitter would play a key role in the campaign (Channel 4 News, 2010), particularly after the successful use of the medium during Barack Obama's 2008 US presidential election bid. Yet this did not prove to be the case; if anything it proved to be the television election (Wring and Ward, 2010; Dale, 2010) due to the focus of the media on the leader debates.

There is clear evidence from both the UK and further afield that campaigns can be effective in increasing both vote share and turnout. Not all campaigns are equal however. The incumbency of a candidate plays a key role in affecting how much impact a campaign can make upon party vote shares, with incumbents having less of an effect than challengers. Technology may also affect the impact a campaign can have, although at present there is insufficient evidence for definite conclusions to be made.

The importance of marginality

The concept of constituency marginality is central to this thesis, which argues that low level campaigns run in safe constituencies are detrimental to electoral outcomes. But what does marginality mean? The name itself is perhaps a little misleading, implying a focus on what it is to be marginal, but in it refers to the entire spectrum of constituency safety; from the safest to the most marginal. The primary alternative of constituency/electoral security (Dropp and Peskowitz, 2012) is little better, indicating a focus on safety.

For a concept which has entered into popular usage, not only by political parties but academic researchers and the media, marginality is not often explicitly examined. There has been only one extended study into the definition in the UK by Cornford and Dorling (1997). Curtice and Steed drew some parallels between changes in the 'economic geography'

(Curtice and Steed, 1986:216) affecting electoral geography (particularly between urban and rural locations) which in turn increased the number of safe constituencies between 1955 and 1983. Identifying the origins of constituency marginality have also tended to be implicit and extended from the theoretical models of voter behaviour discussed previously in this chapter. Safe Labour and Conservative seats often have higher levels of working class and middle class voters respectively, but there needs to be a clear examination to establish whether this relationship between class and constituency marginality is causal or mere coincidence. In chapter four, this thesis engages with this idea in some detail.

The meaning of marginality

As Jacobson makes clear in his study of marginality in the USA, measures of marginality are 'estimates of vulnerability' (1987:129) measuring not only marginal seats, but safer ones as well. The conventional definition of constituency marginality used in the UK (Lightbown and Mellows-Facer, 2009) is based on two key concepts; vote proximity and seat turnover. In terms of the proximity of the top two parties in a constituency at the start of an election campaign, where these parties have a vote difference of 9.99 percent or below the seat is classified as marginal, whereas those where the parties have a distance of 10 percent or above are safe (Curtice and Steed, 1986 – although their definition is based primarily on two-party constituencies). The time-frame of this proximity also matters, with a constituency being described as marginal or safe based on the previous election results (even during an election campaign) which can be actual or notional in the case of boundary changes (Rallings and Thrasher, 1995; 2007). This simple differentiation between safe and marginal can also be disaggregated to measure different degrees of marginality. As used by Norris (2009a; 2009b), marginal constituencies can be either ultra-marginal (a previous majority of 0.1-4.99 percent) or very marginal (5-9.99 percent), while safe constituencies are divided into three categories; fairly safe (10-14.99 percent), very safe (15-19.99) and ultra-safe (20 percent and above). Both definitions are used in this thesis, with the simple safe/marginal definition offering easy identification, with the disaggregated version also allowing comparison of the relative experiences between safe constituencies.

The primary characteristic of marginality originates from the closeness of the top two parties; when they are close the constituency is marginal and when they are far apart it is

safe. The secondary element of the marginality definition is that of seat turnover. Marginality is, as Jacobson (1987) describes above, evidence of vulnerability, and the focus on vote proximity would appear to reinforce this. But what is it that constituencies are vulnerable to? The answer is seat turnover. A fundamental element of the FPTP electoral system used in the UK is the ability to form strong government (Birch, 1972), with the so-called winner's bonus advantaging the largest party by building strong majorities. Under this system, the party or parties seeking to form a Government should have the majority of MPs; although it is possible to govern in minority, but this relies on the other parties in Parliament not forming a majority coalition. As the system has single-member constituencies, they also need to hold the majority of constituencies. Arguably, with parties seeking to win the most seats, seat turnover is the driving force behind change in FPTP systems. Some authors such as Curtice and Steed (1986) have argued that the two are closely linked, with the number of safe UK constituencies between 1955 and 1983 rising while the numbers of seats changing hands declined. Norris and Crewe build on this argument, concluding that 'marginality is only one, albeit an important, contributor to potential seat turnover' (1994: 204) alongside other elements such as change in swing and incumbency.

There has been limited engagement with the numeric value of the definition of marginality used in the UK. The cut-off point between safe and marginal constituencies has been described as an arbitrary one, as Jacobson argues in the US context (1987:126). Cornford and Dorling (1997:74) have provided the only concerted effort to test the appropriateness of the use of this cut-off in the UK, accusing it of being a measure 'wholly arbitrary in terms of actual performance'. To put the measure of marginality to the test, the authors use the electoral triangles method (Upton, 1976; 1994). They base their categorisation of marginality solely upon the 'historical precedent' (Cornford and Dorling, 1997:78) of seat turnover in a constituency. This illustrates the value placed on turnover as a key component of defining marginality in their article, which is follows Curtice and Steed's (1986) perception of marginality. A contestable seat is defined as one that 'one which occupies a position in the triangle with a...probability of changing hands at a subsequent election which is 0.1 or greater (a one in ten or better chance)' (Cornford and Dorling, 1997:79), and this definition works well for them, with only 1 percent of those constituencies changing hands falling outside this limit. There are weaknesses with this narrow focus upon seat turnover, particularly as it does not take into account competition within seats or additional factors within constituencies (such as those envisaged by Norris and Crewe (1994). This definition

also fails to take into account atypical election results, yet I would argue that a major flaw in their research is the causality of the relationship.

No matter what classification is employed, the marginality of a constituency is based upon the results from the last election. Where boundaries have changed, notional vote shares are used to produce new hypothetical assessments of what the previous election results would have been. Yet Cornford and Dorling, perhaps due to their heavy reliance on seat turnover, base their measure of probabilistic marginality on election results between 1955 and 1987. Such a reliance on results does not acknowledge boundary changes or the marginality of constituencies *during* election campaigns. It is difficult to see how their historic precedence of turnover can be relied upon when the constituency may have changed considerably over the 32 year period of their study.

Nevertheless, their examination offers interesting results that the arbitrary ten per cent differentiation between safe and marginal constituencies is an effective measure of constituencies changing hands. When comparing the results of their study, the areas indicating the arbitrary definition matched well with the probabilistic marginal constituencies (those identified in the study as most likely to change hands) mapped over them. Although the correlation between the two measures is not perfect (which is impossible – there will always be anomalous constituencies), the two measures match reasonably well, particularly for constituencies that are either Conservative/Labour or Conservative/Liberal Democrat. This representation of an attempt to produce an alternate definition of marginality has actually resulted in validation of the conventional measure.

The impact of marginality on local campaigning

Marginal constituencies have increasingly become the focus of recent UK elections, with it being common to publicise marginal constituencies to target well in advance of forthcoming elections (Wintour, 2013). It is the implications of this increasing diversion of resources towards marginal constituencies from safe constituencies that forms the problem addressed by this thesis. Of course this is the most rational distribution of resources (Johnston and Pattie, 2003b) for the parties (targeting those constituencies they are most likely to win), but no researcher in the UK has examined the problem from the alternative perspective presented here. If the results are indeed that neglecting safe constituencies negatively impacts both

local turnout and party vote share, the rationality of the resources distribution itself may be questioned[7].

The 'ruthless emphasis' (Butler and Rose, 1960: 135) of parties on marginal constituencies is not entirely new; some evidence can be found from the 1950s onwards, although this did not mean this tactic was successful in affecting the local outcome (Butler and Kavanagh, 1984:212). Alongside the changes in technology and the value that political parties put on local campaigning (Denver, Hands and Henig, 1998) was the rise in interest in constituency campaigning by academic researchers. Some early articles contrasted differing campaign experiences between marginal and safe constituencies. While Johnston and Pattie (1995) link higher levels of spending with marginal constituencies, in the first examination of their campaign activity data, Denver and Hands (1992) established that campaigning (amount of leaflets delivered, canvassing, posters and polling day activities) was most likely to be intense in marginal constituencies. This finding comes despite their use of an unconventional differentiation between safe and marginal constituencies (15 percent) which appears not to have caught on.

Since the 1997 general election there has been an increasing concentration of the attention both academics and political parties pay to marginal constituencies at the expense of safe constituencies, which was a result of the success of targeting such constituencies at the election. The Labour Party, in order to secure victory after 18 years in opposition, naturally needed to gain the maximum number of seats possible. These were mostly Conservative constituencies as Labour and the Liberal Democrats had privately agreed (Rawnsley, 2001) to run tactical campaigns in many (predominantly marginal) constituencies; Liberal Democrat voters whose local candidate stood no chance of winning were urged instead to vote for the local Labour candidate (Evans, Curtice and Norris, 1998). This was part of a complex electoral strategy mounted which took advantage of all available technology (down to candidates being given pagers to keep abreast of political developments). The campaign involved:

[7] This is not to say that campaign levels are the only type of activity that marginality can impact. There is also evidence that marginality can have an impact in other areas as well as levels of campaigning, with the impact of marginality on the voting record of incumbents (known as the marginality hypothesis) being explored in the USA (Cohen and Brunk 1983). Under this hypothesis which has been supported by empirical investigations, incumbent politicians whose seats are marginal are more likely to be closely attuned to voter interests and the concerns of their constituents.

> ‘the ruthless targeting of resources upon 91 pre-selected target seats. All other seats—dubbed ‘majority seats’—were expected to run high profile but low-cost and low-resource campaigns. Party members in the majority seats were strongly encouraged to help the campaigns in nearby target seats.’ (Hands and Denver, 2004: 710)

This was extremely successful, resulting in the subsequent concentration of resources on marginal constituencies in elections thereafter. In practice this meant that these seats constantly receive ‘vastly disproportionate attention’ (Denver and Hands, 1992: 541), at the expense of safe seats that have been left ‘almost completely …alone’ (Ballinger, 2002: 212). Contemporary research, focusing on the experiences of marginal constituencies illustrates the increased redirection of resources towards such seats, with clear evidence associating all forms of campaigning (Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2008: 379) with marginal constituencies. These targeted operations are often effective (Denver, Hands and Henig, 1998), with clear support for the increased flow of resources away from safe constituencies by Pattie and Johnston (2010:487) who perceive the prioritising of marginal constituencies over ’dead loss or very safe seats’ as an efficient use of resources. Parties also use different campaign techniques in constituencies, and as Fisher and Denver (2009) explain, a key factor in deciding where the more modern methods are to be utilised is the constituency’s marginality. All three parties were most likely to use modern campaign techniques in marginal constituencies.

Marginal constituencies increasingly receive the attention of political parties and academic researchers; yet in doing so researchers have failed to address the full picture of constituency campaigning in the UK. Although there are cursory references to safe seats (sometimes referred to as ‘not held, not targets’), there has been little engagement with why some constituencies are safe, but also what effect neglecting such constituencies may have on local outcomes. As an exception, Denver, Hands and McAllister (2004) *do* examine the relative effectiveness of levels of campaign activity in elections between 1992 and 2001. The study explores relative effectiveness of campaigning upon both turnout and vote share according to the quartile in which the campaigning measure falls. The higher the quartile, the more effective campaigning is in raising both turnout and vote share; most interesting in the context of this thesis are the results for those campaigns which fall into the first quartile (the lowest); a clear decline in both turnout and vote share, offering initial support for our hypothesis. Yet they do not factor in candidate incumbency, which as seen above is important in determining the effectiveness of campaigning. I develop their original idea in chapter five by proposing a quartile-based model of campaign levels which includes not only

indications of incumbency, but also values specific to each of the three parties under investigation.

Conclusion

The theoretical literature on the key themes of marginality, campaigning and vote behaviour have been presented here, with the rest of this thesis adopting a largely rational choice approach to vote behaviour, although elements of sociological models have been included. This is due to the dualistic nature of local electoral outcomes used here, exploring the potential for campaigning to both mobilise and convert voters; neither theory offers a complete explanation of both aspects. Campaigning matters when observing such outcomes because it acts as a source of information through which parties can inform voters of their policies. The chapter has built to develop the conclusions of the theoretical literature explored above to consider the theoretical origins of this thesis and formation of the associated hypotheses. To investigate the overall thesis hypothesis that low level campaigns in safe constituencies have a detrimental impact on local electoral outcomes, disaggregating this into three stages is necessary.

The first stage is to explore marginality as a concept. This thesis draws out the importance of sociological explanations for the origins of constituency marginality by testing the first sub-hypothesis *constituency marginality originates in the local population*. There has been little engagement with the origins of marginality, but there are two key elements of the concept of marginality explored in this chapter: vote proximity and seat turnover. Safe constituencies have a greater distance in vote share between the two parties, and are less likely to change hands than marginal constituencies. It may be that there are some constituency characteristics that make them safe or not, and chapter four explores whether social group memberships are the foundation of constituency marginality. Nested within this first sub hypothesis are two hypotheses exploring i) role of party support and ii) role of population stability. Firstly, *constituency marginality originates from the presence of party support bases*, which draws on durability of social group membership. There are strong links between bases of party support and group memberships in the UK, particularly in regards to class membership and associated class voting. Yet the variation in constituency marginality also recognises that not all constituencies will have strong group memberships like this; in some there may be more voters who vote according to rational choice theory. The second of these nested hypotheses regarding the origins of marginality is *constituency marginality originates from the stability of the local populations*. As with the previous nested hypothesis

on party support bases, this hypothesis once again links sociological models of voter behaviour to marginality. The concept of marginality is concerned with seat turnover; the safer a constituency gets, the less likely it is to change hands. Therefore there is a link between change and marginality, and this can be developed by exploring stability. This has its roots in sociological models of voter behaviour, with group memberships providing durable bases of party for population. Stable populations, represented by group memberships, are therefore linked to safer constituencies. Yet sociological theories do not explain change well; arguably therefore such theories offer a better explanation for safe constituencies than for marginal seats.

The second sub hypothesis of the overall hypothesis is *constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency, with safer constituencies seeing less campaigning*. Within this are nested four sets of hypotheses examining the contrasting links between marginality, campaign spending and campaign activities, as well as introducing examinations of the relationship between marginality and campaigning according to party and incumbency. Existing literature has demonstrated a clear link between marginality and campaigning, and going back to the theoretical approach to voter behaviour, this link can be interpreted as depending largely upon the nature of marginality itself. Marginality relies on vote proximity and the likelihood of seat change, a factor enhanced by the simple majorities required by the FPTP electoral system. In marginal constituencies the value of p is larger than in safe constituencies; which clearly links marginality and local electoral outcomes. Campaigning is used in this thesis as an important intervening variable which reflects the p value of the constituency. As the p value rises in a constituency, so does the proximity and urgency for the political parties to concentrate on the seat.

One of the nested hypotheses within the sub hypothesis linking marginality and levels of campaigning is that *the impact of marginality on campaigning varies across parties*. A party which campaigns nationwide must target resources, so habitually in recent elections parties have targeted marginal constituencies. This means that voters in safe constituencies are receiving less information about their local candidate and are therefore less able to make an informed decision. The Liberal Democrats who have the most limited resources of the three parties studied in this thesis have historically targeted heavily. I expect that the Liberal Democrats, as the smallest of the three parties studied, have to target marginal constituencies the most and so the information from the party to voters will vary significantly. This is likely to mean that of the parties, the Liberal Democrats have the most detrimental low level campaigns.

The final stage of the overall thesis hypothesis, expressed by the third sub-hypothesis is *the level of campaigning has an impact on local electoral outcomes*. Following the example of Johnston and Pattie (1995), campaigning has been clearly linked here with information theory. The nested hypotheses within this sub-hypothesis compare the impact of low levels of campaigning on turnout, vote share and then compare the two. The voting decision under rational choice theories of voter behaviour is based on costs and benefits, yet, the benefits associated with voting in safe constituencies vary; they can be low as the chance of casting the crucial vote is much lower, but they can also be high, as the incumbent candidate who they will already have the most information on is likely to win. In more marginal constituencies, the costs of processing multiple sources of information on different parties is high, but the likelihood of casting the crucial vote and getting your preferred party into power means that the benefits of voting are also high. Turnout is likely to be higher in marginal constituencies because the chance of casting the decisive vote is far greater in constituencies with small majorities and thereby increasing the benefits received. I explore whether *low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on turnout;* an outcome likely because the chance for the individual voter of casting the decisive vote is significantly reduced, thereby reducing the benefits of voting. When the top two parties in a constituency run low level campaigns, turnout will be depressed not only as the costs of obtaining information are raised considerably, but also because the lack of information does not mobilise those who vote according to their social groups.

Low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on party vote share because there is less information in regards to party policies and candidate positions. With opposition candidates more likely to run low level campaigns in safe constituencies, the costs of finding information about their polices to enter into the party differential calculation are increased. Conversely, costs associated with voting in safe constituencies may be lower for precisely the same reason; low level campaigns offer less information for the voter to process, so the decision on how to vote is simplified. This is in contrast to marginal constituencies, where both costs and benefits are high. Voters in these constituencies where campaigning is intense will have a greater amount of information on party positions to enter into their utility calculations.

This overall hypothesis leads to two more specific hypotheses relating to the effect of incumbency and parties. The first is *opposition candidates in safe constituencies are more likely to run detrimental low level campaigns.* Under rational choice theories of voter behaviour, to make the voting decision, the voter looks back at the incumbent's track record

in power and considers what the opposition candidate would have offered had they been in power over the same period. This enables them to calculate the party differential; estimating which candidate provides them with the greatest utility. However, opposition candidates are more likely to run low level campaigns than incumbent candidates; I believe that this severely impacts the ability for the voter to calculate what benefits they might have received from the opposition candidate by limiting the information available to them and increasing the costs of obtaining such information.

The next chapter presents the methodology used to explore the hypotheses gathered from the theoretical framework above. It points to a new way forward in examining local campaigning by understanding the majority of constituencies in the UK. Constituency campaigning is effective in those constituencies where it is intense, but what about those constituencies where it is not? The following chapter operationalises the thesis hypothesis, and considers how this problem might be investigated using a range of data sources.

Chapter 3
Methodology

Intense campaigns in marginal seats have a largely positive impact on local turnout and party vote shares (see for example Denver et al., 2002; Johnston et al., 2013; Whiteley and Seyd, 2003 among others). Yet the literature has failed to examine the potentially detrimental impact such a redirection of resources might have on local electoral outcomes (party vote share and turnout) in those constituencies which are increasingly overlooked by parties: safe constituencies. This thesis fills this gap by focusing instead on safe constituencies and examines whether *low level campaigns in safe constituencies are detrimental to local electoral outcomes*. To answer this hypothesis, it is broken down into three sub hypotheses within which are a series of nested hypotheses. These address nuances of the relationship including the role of incumbency, party and the origins of marginality. This focus on the electoral experiences of safe constituencies does not mean that the thesis argues that the study of marginal constituencies should be abandoned; rather it actually *supports* existing research into constituency campaign effectiveness by proposing that the relative absence of campaigning can be harmful.

This chapter constructs a detailed methodological framework through which the overall hypothesis can be tested. It identifies, defines and measures the key variables associated with the hypothesis; namely marginality, campaign intensity and electoral outcomes. The origins and framing of the hypothesis are clearly explained, and a series of associated sub-hypotheses to be answered in later chapters are set out. This study draws on positivist research notions, offering a scientific approach to the testing of the hypothesis which will be undertaken as a large scale quantitative study. It considers not only the limitations that have had to be imposed upon the study (namely time frames, geographical regions and parties) but also the data collection techniques that have been used. A clear framework of the analysis to be undertaken in this thesis will close the chapter

Thesis hypothesis and research questions

Marginality is the independent variable of this thesis and the dependent variable is local electoral outcomes, operationalised in two dimensions as vote share and turnout. Campaigning acts as an intervening variable in the relationship between the independent and

dependent variables by providing information to voters. The level of such information largely depends upon constituency marginality, with voters in safe constituencies receiving low levels of information. Campaigning affects local outcomes by influencing the level of information that is available to the voter, which enables decisions to be made regarding party positions, lowering the costs associated with voting.

The thesis hypotheses give rise to three sub-hypotheses (summarised in Box 3.1) breaking down the stages of the overall hypothesis: the origins of marginality, the links between levels of campaigning and marginality, and the impact of low level campaigns on electoral outcomes. Within these are nested a series of more nuanced hypotheses focusing on more specific elements of the research, introducing the new campaign measure of leader visits and considering their potential to make an impact on local results. They draw the focus from the general relationship to more specific examples. King, Keohane and Verba (1994:15) argued that hypotheses should serve two purposes: to answer a question important in the real world and also to make 'a specific contribution to an identifiable scholarly literature'. My hypotheses fit both of these requirements because I am examining constituency campaigning, which is not a one-off phenomenon and can affect not only the outcome in a constituency (involving questions of voter representation and MP accountability). Also, the research is being conducted in an established field. Party resources are redirected to marginal constituencies at the expense of safer seats, with intense constituency campaigns effective in boosting both vote share and turnout; yet there has been no research on the impact this redirection has on safer constituencies. In drawing on existing literature and reinterpreting the key arguments, this thesis will make a clear contribution to the literature, leading to a piece of work that complements others in the area.

Box 3.1 details the nested hypotheses to be answered in this thesis. Following the example of positivist research each of these 'intellectual puzzles' (Mason, 1996) are clearly causal in that they examine the impact of one variable upon another.

Box 3.1: Sub-hypotheses

Sub-hypotheses

1) **Constituency marginality originates in the local population**

Safe constituencies have a higher proportion of traditional party support bases than marginal constituencies

Safe constituencies have more stable populations than marginal constituencies

2) **Constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency, with safer constituencies seeing less campaigning**

The safer the constituency the less is spent during a campaign and the less campaign activities are conducted.

The impact of marginality on campaigning varies across parties and incumbency

Opposition parties campaign less in safe constituencies than in marginal constituencies

Incumbent parties campaign less in safe constituencies than in marginal constituencies

Opposition candidates in safe constituencies campaign less than incumbent candidates in safe constituencies

Opposition leaders are more offensive in their pattern of visits

Opposition leaders are more likely to visit marginal constituencies

3) **The level of campaigning has an impact on local electoral outcomes**

Low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on turnout

Low level campaigns run by opposition parties have a greater negative impact on turnout than those run by incumbents.

When a constituency is visited by a party leader, there is a positive impact on turnout

There is a greater positive impact on turnout when an opposition leader visits than when the incumbent party leader visits.

Low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on party vote share

Low level campaigns run by opposition parties have a greater negative impact on party vote share than those run by incumbents.

When a constituency is visited by a party leader, there is a positive impact on that party's vote share

When a constituency is visited by an opposition party leader, there is a greater positive impact on party vote share than when the incumbent party leader visits.

Low levels of campaigning have a greater negative impact on vote share than on turnout

They incorporate relational aspects by comparing the impact of low level campaigns between parties and candidate incumbencies and offer a clearly deductive approach to the analysis. The sub-hypotheses also incorporate important sub-literatures in the field of constituency campaigning (particularly in regards to incumbency) and the examination of original data on leader visits for the first time in the UK makes a clear contribution to literature on constituency campaigns.

Constituency marginality originates in the local population

The first of the sub-hypotheses *constituency marginality originates in the local population* examines the nature and origins of the independent variable used in the thesis hypothesis. As explored in the last chapter, constituency marginality is relatively unstudied, with a lack of explicit literature identifying why some constituencies are marginal and others are safe. This sub-hypothesis attempts to explain the origins of marginality by rooting the concept in the constituency population, drawing on theories of party support and population stability to explore whether common demographic profiles can be established. Within this are nested hypotheses which will be tested in chapter four. The first of these examines whether *safe constituencies have a higher proportion of traditional party support bases than marginal constituencies*. Existing literature has drawn links between particular social groups and support for particular parties; in the UK context class remains an important explanatory variable for Conservative and Labour support, despite dealignment over recent decades, and is usually operationalised through occupational classifications. This first nested hypothesis explores the links between levels of class-based party support bases and constituency marginality. There is relatively little research linking the two concepts, but what research there is (Denver, Hands and McAllister, 2003) indicates a link, but only at a single election. By studying this hypothesis, this thesis adds to existing literature by establishing the relation between party support bases and marginality over multiple elections, and also by exploring the role of class in contemporary UK politics.

The second nested hypothesis explores whether *safe constituencies have more stable populations than marginal constituencies*. Marginality is closely related to seat turnover, which is an expression of change; it is plausible to suggest that the driver of change in

constituencies is population changes. To measure population stability the thesis draws upon Putnam's (1966) identifications of social stability; signs that investment in the constituency has been made through home ownership. Such sections of the population are less likely to move from the constituency, encouraging stability in the demographics and therefore encouraging larger majorities.

Constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency, with safer constituencies seeing less campaigning

The second stage of the thesis hypothesis engages with the campaigning experiences of safe constituencies, bringing together two key concepts of this thesis: marginality and campaigning. The sub-hypothesis *constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency, with safer constituencies seeing less campaigning* draws on existing evidence from existing literature that has demonstrated that parties target their resources towards marginal constituencies. In this hypothesis, a clear association is also established between safe constituencies and low levels of campaigning. It is possible that parties are indeed increasing their campaigning in marginal constituencies, but the hypothesis clearly establishes whether at the same time safe constituencies are being comparatively neglected. Within this second sub-hypothesis are nested a series of associated hypotheses which bring in a range of considerations from existing literature, all of which are investigated in chapter five. Firstly existing literature is divided in the measurement of campaigning, whether using measures of campaign activity or campaign spending. There is a nested hypothesis for each of these measures, which consider whether safe constituencies experience lower levels of spending and canvassing during election campaigns.

Two nuances of the relationship between marginality and campaigning are investigated by exploring the differences introduced by parties and incumbencies. By examining whether *the impact of marginality on campaigning varies across parties* findings from existing literature are incorporated which clearly show that some parties are more effective in their local campaigning than others. Before 2001, the Conservatives ran the least effective local campaigns (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b), whereas in subsequent elections they have displayed increasingly rational and effective campaign strategies. The two other parties strategically targeted their resources and therefore reaped electoral rewards far earlier than the Conservatives, with Labour's landslide victory in 1997 demonstrating the success of

strategic targeting under Operation Victory (Wring, 2001). Despite losing the 2010 general election, Labour's local campaign was still proved to be effective (Fisher, Cutts and Fieldhouse, 2011). The Liberal Democrats have strategically targeted constituencies throughout the period (Rennard, 2011), largely due to their limited resources in comparison to the two larger parties. Such evidence all indicates that the effectiveness of intense campaigns does vary according to the different parties; it is entirely plausible that such differences between the parties may be observed when studying low level campaigns.

Another sub-field of the literature on campaigning is drawn on by considering the hypothesis that *the impact of marginality on campaigning varies across incumbencies.* Jacobson's (1978) study into the effectiveness of campaign expenditure proved a link between intense spending and an improvement in candidate vote share. However, spending by opposition candidates was found to be considerably more effective than that by incumbent candidates. This has been reflected in the UK (Norton and Wood, 1990; Wood and Norton, 1992) with additional indications that incumbency boosts vote share irrespective of the level of campaigning. By examining incumbency and low level campaigns, this thesis considers whether low level campaigning is more harmful when run by incumbents or opposition. Nested within this hypothesis are two others which contrast the impact of campaigning according to incumbency. The first argues that both incumbent and opposition candidates campaign less in safe constituencies as the priorities of parties are different to those in marginal constituencies. The next nested hypothesis considers how incumbency impacts on campaigning levels within safe constituencies by exploring whether *opposition candidates in safe constituencies campaign less than incumbent candidates in safe constituencies.* Whereas the distance to power for an opposition party in a marginal constituency is relatively small, it is much larger the safer the constituency, making it more likely that opposition candidates will campaign less than incumbents.

The final three nested hypotheses in the relationship between marginality and campaigning explore the impact of incumbency on leader visits, a case study of which is made in chapter eight. Here, incumbency is discussed in terms of national incumbency, and the hypotheses not only contrast whether *opposition leaders are more active than governing leaders*, but also whether *opposition leaders are more offensive in their pattern of visits* and if *opposition leaders are more likely to visit marginal constituencies.*

The level of campaigning has an impact on local electoral outcomes

The last of the three sub-hypotheses addresses the second stage of the thesis hypothesis by considering whether *the level of campaigning has an impact on local electoral outcomes*. It establishes whether campaigning levels play a central role in affecting behaviour by considering what occurs in constituencies where campaigning (and the information it provides) is minimal. It also addresses a gap in the existing literature by explicitly considering the harmful potential effects that a lack of campaigning may have.

The first set of sub-hypotheses examines whether *low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on turnout*. In comparison to studies on the potential of constituency campaigns to affect vote share, there have been fewer studies examining the impact of campaigning on turnout (Denver, Hands and MacAllister, 2004); nevertheless, such studies do link rises in turnout with intense campaigns. As with the previous question, this thesis extends the conventional findings by exploring whether the impact of low level campaigns may be detrimental to turnout levels. Incumbency is once again central to the nested hypotheses, which contrast whether *low level campaigns run by opposition parties have a greater negative impact on turnout than those run by incumbents.* There are also two nested hypotheses for leader visits which consider whether they have a positive impact on turnout, and whether *when a constituency is visited by an opposition party leader, there is a greater positive impact on turnout than when the incumbent party leader visits.*

The second set of nested hypothesis within this final stage explore whether *low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on party vote share*. If intense local campaigns in marginal constituencies boost vote share, then it is possible that low levels of campaigning may reduce vote share. Nested within this sub-hypothesis are three others that explore how incumbency affects the relationship between campaigning and vote share. By examining whether *low level campaigns run by opposition parties have a greater negative impact on party vote share than those run by incumbents*, the relative impact of low level campaigns between the two types of candidate can be contrasted. The second and third nested hypotheses also deal with the impact of leader visits on party vote share. Evidence indicates that *when a constituency is visited by a party leader, there is a positive impact on that party's vote share*; this thesis tests this directly. The third brings in incumbency by contrasting the electoral rewards of visits by incumbent and opposition leaders.

Local electoral outcomes

The overall thesis hypothesis takes marginality as the independent variable and explores its impact on local electoral outcomes (the dependent variable) via the intervening variable of campaign levels. As the dependent variable in this thesis, local electoral outcomes have been operationalised in two dimensions: vote share and turnout. Therefore, when detrimental effects are referred to, what this study explores is whether a lack of campaigning leads to a *decline* in vote share and turnout in the constituency. These two dimensions have been chosen to reflect the dualistic mobilisation and conversion potential of campaigning under the rational choice/sociological approach proposed in the previous chapter. As vote share and turnout are two dimensions of the same dependent variable, they have been measured in a very similar way. To measure vote share, I will use election results at the constituency level for each election during the period, with vote share measured as the percentage of the total vote in that constituency gained by a party. Where there have been changes in constituency boundaries, notional data on previous vote share in the constituency will be used. Turnout is operationalised in a similar manner; as the percentage of registered voters who voted in the constituency, which is the conventional approach in UK studies.

Marginality

As a reaction to the increasing attention parties, researchers and the media pay to marginal constituencies, this thesis places the identification of safe constituencies at the heart of its analysis, with marginality as the independent variable of the overall hypothesis. To do this I have taken cues from other authors (Lightbown and Mellows-Facer, 2009) by using the conventional division between marginal and safe constituencies. This measure is based on the vote proximity of the top two parties in a constituency (Norris and Crewe, 1994); the closer the parties are, the more marginal the constituency and vice versa. Closely connected to this definition and the concept of marginality is seat turnover (Curtice and Steed, 1986), with marginal constituencies seen as more likely to change hands. The division between marginal and safe constituencies falls at 9.99 percentage points; seats with a vote proximity below this are marginal, and seats above are safe, with Cornford and Dorling's research (1997) confirming the validity of the construct. This simple dual definition can also be disaggregated into a conventional five category classification of constituency marginality, again dividing safe and marginal constituencies according to the 9.99 percentage point vote

proximity, which enables researchers to identify a spectrum of constituencies from ultra-safe (majority of 4.99 or below) in 5 percentage point increments to ultra-safe seats (majorities of 20 percentage points and above). This more detailed measure facilitates comparisons to be made between different types of safe constituency.

Campaign Intensity

Campaigning acts as an important intervening variable between marginality and local electoral outcomes; measuring campaigning is therefore vital in the identification of levels of campaigning. There are two measures of campaign intensity in use by existing researchers: campaign expenditure (Johnston and Pattie, 1997; 2008) and campaign activity (using data from party members and party agents: Denver et al., 2002; Whiteley, Seyd and Billinghurst, 2006). This thesis makes use of both measures and also supplements them with an additional measure of leader visits.

One of the chief measures of campaigning has been the examination of campaign spending data. Studies using campaign expenditure to measure the effects of campaigning on both votes and turnout first originated in the 1970s in the USA, where reforms of campaign finance had created reliable data for examination. Campaign expenditure has been used as a proxy for campaigning in a variety of studies examining a range of contests from state legislature races (Welch, 1981) to congressional elections (Jacobson, 1978; 1980). Palda (1973; 1975) also used campaign spending to measure advertising and its effectiveness in Canadian elections. The first study in the UK was Taylor's (1972) examination of campaigning spending and votes at the 1970 election, and the research grew with Denver and Hands (1974; 1985) examining the impact of campaign spending on turnout. However, Johnston (1979) was the first to engage in detail with campaign expenditure, and subsequent research has indicated 'the more spent – almost all of it on "advertising" the party and its candidate – the better the return' (Johnston and Pattie 2008:129). Yet this measure has not been without controversy.

A key issue in the use of campaign spending as an operationalisation of campaigning is validity. In response to an article by Johnston (1979) linking advertising and campaign expenditure, Gordon and Whiteley (1980:293) countered that 'anyone who has been directly involved in electioneering knows that expenditures incurred and expenditures declared are only weakly related, and the latter is almost completely unrelated to the campaign effort'. These are two different points, and it is worth considering them in turn. Firstly, they raise

the objection that the spending figures incurred and actually reported are 'only weakly related' and that this conclusion is based on personal experiences both as a prospective parliamentary candidate and an election agent. This raises a few important issues. In relying on inaccurate spending figures to measure campaigning, then it follows that any conclusions drawn in regards to the effectiveness of campaign spending are invalid. Johnston, however, raises issue with this on the basis that 'presumably, election agents are filing false returns' (Johnston, 1979:113) which is not only dishonest, but illegal. In a later article Pattie and Johnston do partially admit reservations over this issue by concluding that 'many party organizations probably manage their expenditure so that more is spent than reported;' (Pattie and Johnston, 1998c: 678). Yet they present the case that even if figures are slightly manipulated by parties in order to conform to legal restrictions, 'the pattern of reported spending is consistent with expectations derived from rational choice theory' (Pattie and Johnston, 1998c: 678). As such, even though reported figures may not definitively represent exactly what has been spent, the spending distributions do appear to fit in with theoretical underpinnings so any false reporting would appear to have a minor effect upon spending distributions.

The second point of Gordon and Whiteley's statement is their declaration that campaign effort and declared spending figures are 'completely unrelated'. This, if it was entirely true, might cause it to be considered whether campaign spending represents a valid measure of campaign effort. However, Pattie and Johnston defend their use of campaign expenditure data whilst acknowledging that they are 'not a perfect measure' (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b: 386) and cannot capture all activities of a constituency campaign. Evidence from other studies (see in particular Gerber and Green, 2000) has indicated that canvassing is effective in not only mobilising the vote, but also in affecting vote choice, yet it costs comparatively little. In the UK constituency campaigns are run 'almost entirely' (Gordon and Whiteley, 1980:293) by party volunteers who are not paid for their time and therefore would not show up on the recorded campaign spending figures, despite potentially making a difference to the final vote. The costs associated with activities such as canvassing are more likely to be time costs for volunteer workers, rather than formal expenditure to be recorded on the final balance sheet. Campaign spending as a proxy for campaigning can only provide a partial picture of the local campaign, with costs largely going on leaflets and posters (Denver, Hands and McAllister, 2004:291). Therefore, a constituency party could canvass heavily with the potential of making a significant difference to the local vote, yet this campaign effort would not be accounted for by the campaign expenditure figures. As such, campaign

expenditure figures may only represent a rough picture of the effort that was put into the campaign.

Pattie and Johnston (1998c) counter such criticisms by offering two key explanations; the validity of the campaign spending measure is very much dependent upon what is being measured and also that evidence supports the usefulness of campaign expenditure as a proxy for local campaigning. In regards to the first point, Johnston (1979) was analysing the effectiveness of advertising which is predominantly comprised of printing costs (traceable expenditure). Therefore, as he was measuring campaign activity that was directly represented on the balance sheet, campaign expenditure was an appropriate measure to use. Indeed in their 1998 work, Pattie and Johnston (1998c: 678) found that in excess of 80 per cent of constituency expenditure is spent on printing leaflets and posters. Secondly, there is a good amount of supporting evidence that campaign spending is an effective operationalisation of campaign intensity. The development of alternative aggregate data sources on constituency campaigning (from agent and member surveys) has enabled researchers to examine the appropriateness of campaign expenditure as a proxy for campaigning. Good levels of correlation between campaign expenditure and data from the party agent surveys (measuring at least seven dimensions of a local campaign, including data not captured by campaign expenditure such as the number of campaign workers) have been found by existing studies (namely Pattie, Whiteley, Johnston and Seyd, 1994; Denver and Hands, 1997; Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2008). This indicates that at some level campaign expenditure is the 'best indicator of the underlying latent construct, campaign effort' (Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2008:381), providing a good justification for examining spending.

Considering the alternative data sources, the major benefit of operationalising campaigning through campaign expenditure is the comprehensiveness that the UK data provide. The data are required by law (since 2000 by the Electoral Commission) for all candidates in all constituencies and the Electoral Commission publishes the full results. Despite reservations over the usage of campaign spending to operationalise campaign effort, Denver, Hands and McAllister admit that the comprehensiveness of the data is advantageous (Denver et al., 2004:291). As such, campaign spending figures represent not only an easily accessible source of data, but in comparison to alternative data sources, it is the only one which provides data for all constituencies. This thesis uses campaign expenditure as its primary measure of campaigning, specifically examining the percentage of the legal maximum spent by each of the three parties in a constituency.

The second group of authors operationalising campaign intensity in the UK are those who use measures of campaign activity derived from surveys of party members and party agents. Seyd and Whiteley use measures of campaign activity originating from their surveys of party members in their studies of constituency campaign effectiveness in the UK. During the 1990s they conducted a series of surveys of party members of the three main parties in the UK to form detailed accounts of the member's characteristics, activism levels and participation (for the Conservatives see Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson, 1994; for Labour see Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; 2002; for the Liberal Democrats see Whiteley, Seyd and Billingshurst, 2006). For each survey, the researchers contacted party headquarters and asked them to distribute the surveys to a random sample of party members. A range of questions was asked on different aspects of the campaign to capture an accurate account of local campaigning. The results from the surveys were then combined via Principal Components Analysis into an index of campaign intensity which could be entered into regression models as the independent variable.

Denver and Hands are the principal researchers in using data collected from surveys of party election agents (see Denver and Hands, 1997a), but often work with other researchers, (Fisher and Denver, 2009). They sent postal questionnaires to election agents in each constituency immediately after each election from 1992 onwards which contained a range of questions regarding the organisation and activities of the campaign: the first survey formed the basis for *Modern Constituency Electioneering* (1997b). Like Seyd and Whiteley they asked a range of questions regarding the election campaign, but focused slightly differently on the overall organisation of the campaign, such as an estimate of the average number of polling day workers and the number of leaflets distributed.

When relying on any survey response there are likely to be questions regarding recall and self-reporting by respondents. It is important to consider what implications these may have for the use of both agent and member data. Seyd and Whiteley have not always collected data immediately post-election; there are some considerable gaps between elections and the member surveys (in the case of the Liberal Democrat sample, almost *two years*: Whiteley and Seyd, 2003: 322) which raises issues in regards to respondent recall. It is possible that this affects the validity of the data, with party members be unable to accurately remember their involvement in the campaign (particularly in those questions regarding the frequency of campaign activism) nearly two years after the events. It may also mean that the results of the election may influence their recollections; if their party won they may overstate their role in the campaign (Whiteley and Seyd, 1998) and vice versa. The validity of Denver and Hands'

data also rely on ‘respondents remembering the details and being honest, for example, and to concentrate mainly on activities during the ‘short’ campaign’ (Denver et al., 2001: 82) plus the fact that these campaign activities would have occurred a number of weeks previously. As (presumably) these agents had no prior knowledge that they were to be surveyed on such activities, it is unlikely that they would have given the recording of such activities much thought, making recalling them more difficult. Similarly, even if respondents had good powers of recall, the difficulty of providing an estimate on ‘the numbers of election posters given out’ (Denver and Hands, 1992: 536) at a later date with any degree of accuracy may be difficult. It is also a considered possibility that agents may be being wilfully untruthful. They may feel that they did not do as much campaigning as was expected or distribute enough literature, which may lead to them reporting false figures. As is inevitably the case with surveys, the validity of the answers lies with the honesty of the respondents, but Denver and Hands take this into account, and whilst admitting that some inaccuracy is inevitable, believe that their measure still represents the activities of a local campaign.

Seyd and Whiteley defend their concentration on local party members as they consider them to play the important role of ‘mobilising the vote’ (Whiteley and Seyd 2003:320) through a wide range of formal and informal campaign activities such as delivering campaign literature, and as such can provide a good idea of the intensity of the campaign. The most appealing aspect of the data is that it ‘has the advantage of focusing on what at least some of the potential foot-soldiers in campaigns actually do on the ground’ (Denver et al., 2004:291). The data produced by Denver and Hands’ surveys of party agents are ‘based on what actually happens on the ground in a constituency campaign – rather than surrogates’ (Denver et al., 2001:82) such as campaign spending. One of the key strengths of Denver and Hands’ use of party agent surveys is that they are surveying ‘the people who organise and direct constituency campaigns’ Denver et al 2001:82) whereas Seyd and Whiteley are asking only some party members. Arguably, as those in charge of the campaign, party agents would be more able to give a rounded picture of it, in comparison to party members who would very likely only be able to give a partial account of the overall campaign. As the secondary measure of campaigning, this thesis uses data produced by Denver and Hands at elections from 1992 until 2001.

This thesis proposes the inclusion of an additional variable to measure local campaigning: leader visits. UK party leaders spend a great deal of time and resources travelling the country and visiting constituencies (Denver and Hands, 1992) during election campaigns, with such visits typically being well-publicised in both local and national media. Recent research in Canada (Carty and Eagles 2005) and the USA (Holbrook 2002) has empirically investigated these visits to explore whether they have an impact on local election results, finding that they are often effective in raising party vote share[8]. Yet there has been no substantive study into leader visits in the UK; a gap filled by original data collected by the present author during the 2010 election campaign, measuring which constituencies were visited by party leaders, on what date and for what purpose. I was also able to measure whether a constituency had been visited multiple times either by the same leader or by more than one. These data were collected initially through identifying visits on the rolling news coverage on the BBC website and supplementing this by other news reports. Constituencies were identified by allocating postcodes to the location through web research, and entering them into the BBC's Constituency Finder (BBC 2010b).

This operationalisation of constituency campaigning represents a valid new source, in terms of data collection and confirmation from external sources. The account of visits collected in this project were cross-referenced with those by the media (the Guardian were running a similar, less detailed project – see Torpey and Sax, 2010) and the parties themselves, to confirm that the data were accurate (my records were found to be the most comprehensive data held). There is also a good degree of external validity, linking back to the core principles of the positivist approach adopted for this thesis, with the data collection being simple to replicate at future elections.

The measure of campaign intensity utilised in this thesis draws on a range of the sources presented above. The primary measure of campaigning will be *campaign expenditure*, as data are available for all constituencies at all elections during the period. Where available, these data will be supplemented by selected additional measures from Denver and Hands' *agent surveys* (the selected variables and the grounds for choosing them will be explored in

[8] They were effective for three of the five parties contesting the 2000 Canadian election, and effective for Truman in 1948

chapter five). Data on *leader visits* offer the potential to be incorporated alongside existing measures of local campaigning, but as a new source of data in the UK an initial case study will be made in chapter eight.

A Quantitative Approach

This thesis adopts a foundationalist ontological approach, which argues that there is a world 'independent of our knowledge' (Furlong and Marsh, 2002:18) and there are fundamental differences of existence within it that create the bases of society. In addressing the thesis hypothesis and associated sub-hypotheses set out above, this work adopts a positivist epistemology, utilising quantitative data to pursue a scientific approach. The key features of positivist research are clear causality, validity of conclusions and wide data coverage enabling a large-scale statistical study to take place. As a positivist study, there is a clear causal hypothesis, and it is empirically tested in the rest of this thesis with quantitative methods to gather 'information, knowledge and understanding' (Black, 1999:3) from direct data observation. Such quantitative studies offer easy inference due to the 'abstract…nature of statistical models' (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994:6); this study uses causal inference in both stages of the hypothesis by not only examining the effect of marginality on levels of campaigning, but also examining the impact of such campaigning on local electoral outcomes. A key feature of the quantitative approach is replicability; by using data which are largely widely available and detailing the collection methods used when gathering original data on leader visits, this thesis is replicable at future elections.

Drawing heavily on the influence of the natural sciences, quantitative studies are usually deductive in that hypotheses originate from theory. The previous chapter explored theories regarding voter behaviour and the potential of campaigns as information providers, which formed the hypothesis. In a deductive study, as in this thesis, this is then tested, before the conclusions feed back into theory (inductivism) by providing knowledge. Reality is viewed objectively and knowledge is only confirmed by evidence that the senses provide (phenomenalism). Positivist hypotheses offer clear definitions of causality, clearly set out by Davis (1985) and Little (1991), which have been adhered to in this study. In the hypothesis laid out above, there is a clear causality between the effect of marginality and the level of campaigning, as well as another between levels of campaigning and local electoral

outcomes. In each stage of the two-step hypothesis the direction of the relationship is clear, yet it could be argued that there is an issue with causality. Constituency marginality is based upon the proximity of the top two parties at the last election (*n-1*); the closer they are, the more marginal the constituency and the greater the effect on campaign levels at the current election (*n*). This campaigning in turn affects local electoral outcomes (one dimension of which is vote share) at *n* which forms the marginality of the constituency at the next election (*n+1*). The cyclical nature of such causality would seem to complicate the simple causality envisaged by positivism, yet here each election between 1987 and 2010 is treated in relative isolation, considering the impact of marginality (n-1) on campaign levels, and their effect on vote share at that election only (n). It is also impossible for it to be a constant cycle, as there have been considerable boundary changes over the period, meaning that the vote share from an election does not always create the constituency marginality for the following election. However, the hypothesis does not assume empirical support and remains falsifiable by keeping this uncertainty in view. Even if the hypothesis remains unproven after analysis, conclusions may be drawn in regards to its failure.

A key element of positivist approaches to research is the idea that the researcher approaches data without values. In comparison to more qualitative approaches (such as interviews) a positivist approach means that it is possible for a researcher to objectively treat data in the scientific manner and there is little risk of transferring your own values onto the results. This is not uncontroversial, with proponents of qualitative research (Quine, 1961) arguing that the idea of researcher neutrality is a myth. The researcher, no matter what kind of data they are working with will bring their own values and be constantly interpreting knowledge through them, and the idea of total value-abstraction (as suggested by Durkheim, 1938) is impossible. Yet it is possible in some cases to significantly abstract ones values from the research, particularly when the data themselves are value-free. In this thesis, all data originate from the aggregate level and there are limited subjective answers (the exceptions being the self-reporting by party agents for the elections between 1992 and 2001). There are of course inherent inescapable values in all researchers, but in this case the validity of the conclusions will be unaffected.

Quantitative research strategies are not without criticism; particularly in regards to the application of a scientific approach to the social environment. By using a strategy akin to the natural sciences, according to some researchers (see Blumer, 1956), the quantitative researcher fails to appreciate the difference between the ‘world of nature’ (Schutz 1963:232)

and society with its many nuances and fluidity. I argue that a quantitative research strategy is the most suitable way of approaching the hypothesis of this thesis for four main reasons; data availability, replicability, convention and validity. The volume of aggregate data available permits quantitative analysis to be undertaken, with a large amount of data available for each constituency at each election: it seems logical to use available resources.

A key justification in pursuing a quantitative study to test the hypothesis is the creation of a measure of levels of campaigning. This thesis argues that there are lower levels of campaign activity in safe constituencies and that this lack of activity is potentially harmful to election results in those constituencies. In order to create a measure of campaign levels, a wide range of data are required to allow the classification of 'low levels' to be positioned in the appropriate place. Following the example of Denver et al. (2004) this measure is based on quartiles of campaign effort (a more detailed description will be given in chapter five), with campaigns in the first quartile classified as low level. To provide an accurate figure for the quartile divisions it is vital that as wide a range of data as possible are used.

Another central element of such research is the replicability of the study, and the current study is easily replicable by using quantitative data. The research will also be generalisable to other elections in the identification of trends in the data (Hempel, 1960). Also, the majority of modern existing research in the field of constituency campaigning in the United Kingdom has been based upon large-scale quantitative data analysis in the positivist tradition. This is not to say that all of the research follows this pattern - in the earlier days of research into constituency campaigning, qualitative data on case study constituencies was used, most memorably by Bochel and Denver (1971) in their experimental study on canvassing and turnout in Dundee. Sanders (2002:56) offers up a study by Seyd and Whiteley, one of the main groups of researchers in the field (although strictly Sanders is referring to a study of party activism, not their studies of campaigning, but the same epistemological approach is employed) as an example of the 'strengths of good behavioural analysis'.

Quantitative data are the best option for answering the hypotheses due to the desire for both external and internal validity. Not only is most of the comparable research in the area based on quantitative data, it is also far easier to generalise and replicate conclusions drawn from quantitative analysis. The hypotheses also possess a good level of internal validity as they are consistent with other theories tested by people working in the same area – for example, existing research suggests that intense campaigning is effective in altering constituency

outcomes. Confirming the positivist approach taken in this thesis, the hypotheses also generate testable predictions with clear causality between campaigning and constituency outcomes. The conclusions drawn shall be based on large-scale empirical analyses with clear replicability, generating a good degree of external hypothesis validity. This replicability was enhanced by retesting to ensure that the results were correct and reliable. To fail to be replicable would raise 'serious questions' (Bryman, 2008:77) in regards to the validity of the conclusions drawn, particularly due to the potential intrusion of values, no matter how hard objectivity is desired.

Case study selection and comparison

This is a study of low level campaigns in safe constituencies and their effect in UK general elections. It uses the UK as a case study within which the impact of low level campaigns in FPTP electoral systems can be examined. Specifically, I examine constituency level campaigns in the UK over the period 1987 to 2010 (the reasons behind this timeframe are explained in the next section). Case study research has a long history in the social sciences[9], yet fundamental elements of the method remain contested by many researchers, particularly over the type of research the method should be applied to. Typically a case study has been seen as a qualitative examination of a research problem undertaken with an inductive purpose and the generation of theory. Some authors view the strategy as even more restrictive, limiting it to narrow fields such as ethnography (Fetterman, 1989). Whereas some authors (Yin, 1984; Blaikie, 2000) have a rather strict definition of a case study as organisationally or temporally bounded, others such as Mitchell (1983) offer a more relaxed definition equating to wherever the researcher decides to define boundaries. Much case study research has been characterised by a poor engagement with the concept, particularly (as suggested by Yin, 1994:2) in regards to the research design. Yet the case study method is easily applicable to quantitative research when providing clearly defined boundaries within which research may take place.

[9] In politics some of the seminal works in voter behaviour have been case studies (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954).

In avoiding the poor engagement with research design as criticised by Yin (1984:8), this study largely conforms to his three conditions for case studies; the type of research questions asked, the control the researcher is able to exert and the contemporary nature of the study. The hypotheses of this thesis, particularly those nested within the three sub-hypotheses, fit well with employing the UK as a case, enabling the researcher to make focused statements and engage with the concepts involved. 'How' and 'why' questions are most typically associated with case study research, and although the hypotheses of this thesis are not framed with such phrases, their motivations are the same. Both how and why questions, and the hypotheses examined here are explanatory; seeking to make sense of a research problem, in this case exploring the impact of low level campaigning on electoral outcomes. In the present case study of local campaigning in the UK, as envisaged by Yin, there is no ability to have control over behaviour in the case; patterns and trends in the data are simply being examined. However, there are key issues with the restrictive way in which Yin interprets this lack of control, with emphasis being placed on observation and interviewing strategies (Yin 1994:8). Such qualitative skills are not part of this thesis. In this case study it is impossible to control behaviour and execute an experimental model (as envisaged by Campbell and Stanley, 1966); it merely observes. A degree of control is able to be exerted by deciding on where the boundaries of the data will be. Lastly, the focus is largely contemporary, in particular the detailed original data collection on leader visits at the 2010 general election, the data collection of which is in the next section. This thesis takes the case study method and applies it to a large-scale quantitative study with a deductive purpose to test whether low level campaigns are detrimental to local electoral outcomes.

By using a case study to test the hypothesis of this thesis, a focused examination of the true impact of campaigning in FPTP systems can be produced. The case study as used here allows a deductive approach to be undertaken by offering clear boundaries within which data may be sourced and analysed. As Bryman suggests (2008), such studies are best understood as an examination of a unique or extreme example of phenomena. In applying this to the use of the UK as a case study in examining the effects of low level campaigning, there are three contextual features that lend themselves to the research process and need to be taken into account, but they do not alter the relevance of the phenomenon being observed: legislation on expenditure limits, the length of the campaign and the context of the period under examination.

Firstly, unlike many other countries where FPTP is in use, the UK has strict legal restrictions on expenditure during campaigning. Spending limits at the constituency level are laid down

by law and are periodically reviewed in order not only to keep the purchasing power fairly constant, but also to reflect the constituency population (Gay, 2009). A basic flat-rate for all constituencies (Great Britain, 1983 and since this Act under Order of the Secretary of State) is allocated (in 2010 it was £7,150) before the limit is boosted according to the population and the location of the constituency, with urban constituencies receiving an additional 5p per voter and rural constituencies receiving 7p per voter (Johnston and Pattie, 2007) due to the differing travel costs for candidates. Similar limits are also used in Canada (Carty and Eagles, 1999; Eagles, 2004). Despite the objections raised by some authors (Gordon and Whiteley, 1980) about the accuracy of spending reporting by candidates and their agents, the limits on campaign expenditure are legal requirements. There are two ways in which limits may be imposed on spending at elections; limiting contributions and restricting expenditure (Milligan and Rekkas, 2008). While legislation in the USA concentrates on contribution limits, the Canadian experience is more similar to the UK, where limits are imposed on spending *during* the campaign. The calculations of Canadian spending restrictions are slightly different; based on the area covered by the constituency and the number of voters resident.

The second contextual feature of the UK is the short campaign period, which lasts from the day that the election is called (when the Queen dissolves Parliament) until Election Day which is held approximately a month later (in 2010, Parliament was dissolved on 6th April and the election was held on 6th May). This intense burst of campaigning differentiates it from other elections; particularly the USA presidential race which takes ten months (McKay, 2005). Stevenson and Vavrek (2000) conducted cross-national research examining the impact of campaign length on the ability of voters to process information. Their study of elections in 13 countries between 1960 and 1990 revealed that the average length of unscheduled elections (where parties had no formal warning that an election was to take place) in the UK was 21.8 days, a figure comparable to Denmark (Party List Proportional Representation) and Ireland (Single Transferable Vote). However, when examining campaign length in other systems using FPTP, the UK was unique in having such a short campaign. In Germany's mixed electoral system (which partially utilises FPTP) the average length of the campaign was 114 days, whereas the only country in the study apart from the UK exclusively using FPTP was Canada, with an average election campaign of 61.25 days. The legislation change in 2009 meant that the UK now has two clearly defined campaign periods for which data on expenditure is collected; the long and the short campaign. However, short intense campaigning may have already passed into history, with the Fixed-

Term Parliaments Act introducing a five year limit on parliamentary terms in 2011. This Act means that unscheduled elections are no longer possible (in most circumstances) so the date of the election will be known well in advance. Lastly, the political and party context in the UK should be taken into account. Although there will be evidence of general trends across FPTP systems in this period (particularly in regards to the adoption of modern campaign techniques and the global context) no other nation precisely replicated the UK context over the period of study.

Nonetheless, the case offers good potential for generalisations to be made. Although generalising from case studies is not easy (Kennedy, 1979) it is possible, although it must be carefully considered what generalisations from the conclusions are intended. As Yin argues, case studies can only be 'generalisable to theoretical propositions…not to populations or universes' (1994:10). So this statement indicates that this case study offers the opportunity to make theoretical generalisations in regards to the impact of campaigning on voter behaviour in FPTP systems, considering in particular the effect when it is lacking. This offers good potential for generalisation, not least as majoritarian electoral systems such as the FPTP model is the second most widely used voting system in the world (Norris, 1997b). The conclusions from existing literature on the effectiveness of local campaigning from the UK are reflected by similar findings in the USA, and Canadian research into local campaigning has drawn heavily on UK-based findings (as summarised in the previous chapter). The similarity of the findings of such studies across different nations using the electoral system indicates that the FPTP electoral system enhances the potential of local campaigning to have an impact on local results. So the case offers a good opportunity to generalise theoretically in regards to the impact of low level campaigning in such electoral systems, as many generalisations have already been drawn.

Case boundaries

By conducting a case study of the effects of low level campaigning on voter behaviour in the UK, a tight focus on key relationships is possible. However, key decisions have had to be made to define the boundaries of the case. This study is temporally bound, looking specifically at local campaigning in the UK between the period of 1987 and 2010 for two main reasons; a varied political context and the fit with existing research into the area of constituency campaign effectiveness.

The spread of six elections offers an interesting variety of national incumbency which is likely to impact on the local campaign strategies of the parties over the period. Offensive and defensive local campaign strategies are easy to discern (Fisher, Cutts and Fieldhouse, 2011), with nationally incumbent parties typically mounting largely defensive campaigns to retain power whilst opposition parties seek to expand their number of seats. The 1987 to 2010 period not only covers two changes of government (1997 and 2010), five Prime Ministers from two parties, but the end of a long Conservative administration, the entire lifecycle of the New Labour government and the first coalition government since the Second World War.

The 1987 to 2010 period is also a neat fit with existing studies and available data. Even though the study of constituency campaign effectiveness (in case study constituencies) dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, it was not until 1987 (see Pattie, Whiteley, Johnston and Seyd, 1994) that large-scale aggregate studies gained in popularity amongst researchers. This led to the use of already available data on campaign expenditure, but also in the collection of new aggregate data sources such as the agent and member surveys already discussed. This means that the period of time selected for this study coincides not only with the increased aggregate focus by existing researchers, but also with the increase in data available to study campaign effectiveness.

One alternative to this coverage of six elections to explain the effects of low level campaigns could have been to extend the temporal boundaries of the study to cover the entire post-war period. This would have provided a far larger source of data from which the evolution of strategic campaigning and the potential impact on safe constituencies could have been analysed. However, such an extended period of study, covering 65 years and 18 elections would have raised two major issues; political context and practicality. The development of the mass media and technology has meant that campaigning has evolved (Hands and Denver, 2002; Pattie and Johnston, 2009b), with traditional methods (such as doorstep canvassing) being used alongside more modern techniques (campaign software). Such developments have also changed much of the way in which parties can contact voters to provide information through which their voting behaviour may be altered. In parallel has been widespread partisan dealignment in the UK electorate (Crewe, Särlvik and Alt, 1977), increasing the potential for campaigning to act as a conversionary force instead of a more mobilisationary one. There have also been a series of boundary changes between 1987 and 2010, and to extend the study historically would result in the need to collect additional data on notional results.

To cover the evolution of the mass media, partisan dealignment, the introduction of computerised campaigning and recent developments such as social media campaigning in a single study risks detracting from answering the thesis hypothesis. At best what could be produced would be a very general picture of the state of campaigning, which would additionally be limited by the availability of campaign data. As will be seen in the next section, early expenditure data are difficult to source and data on campaign activity were only available between 1992 and 2001. The emphasis of the thesis hypothesis on the impact of low level campaigns in safe constituencies would also appear to preclude the extension of this study historically. Marginal constituencies have historically received more attention than their safer counterparts (Denver and Hands, 1985), but it was in the aftermath of the success of Labour's Operation Victory in 1997 that the targeting of marginal constituencies became feverish (Denver, Hands and Henig, 1998).

Practicality also makes extending the study difficult. The master dataset created for this thesis (titled and referred to throughout as *Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010*) provides the researcher with a comprehensive account of election results over the period. It also includes candidate expenditure records for all elections and additional campaign indicators (leader visits included) for three elections, as well as contextual data (including incumbency and census data) throughout the period (the details of variables collected and sources of data are examined in the next section). This single dataset alone contains data on 3804 constituencies and with a minimum of 195 variables per constituency equates to almost 750,000 separate pieces of data. To extend this historically would not only be unwieldy, but it would be unfeasible to explore the data in sufficient detail to form anything beyond a general exploration of the relationship between neglect and marginality, let alone a coherent, focused investigation at the constituency level.

Conversely, the temporal boundaries of the study could be restricted further by reducing the number of elections covered by the study. This would fit well with the majority of studies into constituency campaigning, which tend to be aggregate analyses of single elections (see Pattie et al., 1994; Whiteley and Seyd, 2003), and would enable a focused study to be conducted of the impact of low level campaigns[10]. However, a single-election study would hamper the ability to decisively answer the thesis hypothesis as it would not be possible to

[10] there have been several UK studies which have considered constituency campaign effectiveness over multiple elections: see Wood and Norton (1992) for an examination of 1983 and 1987; Cutts, Fieldhouse and Russell (2010) for more recent comparison of Liberal Democrat campaigns in 2005 and 2010.

tell if the impact of low level campaigning was a specific feature of a particular election, or indicative of a wider trend. By comparing the trends over these six elections the thesis can not only to examine the increased neglect of safe constituencies, but also establish trends in the effects of low level campaigning.

Organisation and spatial limits are also incorporated here, focusing on the three largest parties (Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats) standing in England, Scotland and Wales over the period. The majority of the literature focuses on these three parties together (for example Fisher, Cutts and Fieldhouse, 2011), comparing and contrasting their campaign experiences and finding a great deal of variation. There are, of course, single-party studies (Pattie et al., 1994), but even in Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson's focused study of individual parties (1994) other parties are brought in as comparators. By studying the three parties in place of a single party case study, a more comprehensive view of the relative effectiveness of constituency campaigning in the United Kingdom will be attained, particularly as the existing literature (for a summary, see Fisher and Denver, 2009) has often demonstrated that effectiveness varies between the parties. There could also be variation in the negative impact of low level campaigning between parties, particularly as the Conservatives historically spent a higher proportion in their safe constituencies than the other two parties (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b). Such organisational limitations were imposed not only for reasons of simplicity, but also due to constituency coverage. It would have been possible to include more parties such as the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru and the Green Party, but equally would have introduced many complicating factors to the study, not least that these smaller parties stand in relatively few constituencies (the SNP and Plaid Cymru only stand in Scotland and Wales respectively, and the Green Party stood in over 300 at the last election)

There are two categories of constituency to be excluded from this analysis; those in Northern Ireland and the Speaker of the House of Common's constituency. For Northern Irish constituencies, there are issues in regards to comparison with constituencies elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The party system in Northern Ireland is entirely dominated by parties that stand in Northern Ireland only; Labour and the Liberal Democrats did not stand in Northern Ireland at any point the period under study, and whilst the Conservatives did stand in four of the six elections studied (excluding their link-up with the Unionists in 2010), they remained very much a minority party, standing only in selected seats. This makes it difficult to include Northern Ireland in a study which focuses on the largest parties in the UK as a whole.

Secondly, the Speaker's constituency has been excluded from analysis in but one of the election years. The only year in the period under investigation where there was no 'Speaker constituency' was 1992 as Bernard Wetherill had stood down from his constituency prior to the election on 9th April but was not succeeded by Betty Boothroyd until 27th April. The role of the Speaker is politically neutral, and they must resign from their political party (House of Commons Information Office, 2010) when they assume their position. In the context of elections, the Speaker is conventionally unopposed by other major political parties and they only campaign for re-election, not on any political issues. It would therefore not make any sense in a study of low levels of constituency campaigning to include a constituency which experiences no campaigning by any party at all.

Application of comparative method within UK study

This study also draws on the principles of comparative research when exploring the differing experiences of parties, incumbency and constituencies with different marginalities. Like case study research, the precise definition of comparative research is a contested concept in itself; some authors adopt a restrictive version (Andreski, 1965) limited to cross-societal comparisons, while other researchers (Almond, 1966; Lieberson, 1985; Smelser, 1976) apply the term widely, considering all political research to be inherently comparative. Lijphart (1971), in the definitive article on the method, offers a position between the two extremes as 'one of the basic methods…of establishing general empirical propositions' (1971:682) which has been adopted for this thesis. The comparative method represents a distinct approach (Swanson, 1971), with close links between comparison and scientific approaches to politics, fitting well with the positivist approach adopted here. It offers a method through which trends in the analysis can be systematised and sorted, allowing 'suggestive similarities and contrasts' (Collier, 1993:105) to be identified.

By examining voter behaviour on a large scale through statistical methods, this study fits in well with the macro social element of comparative research as envisaged by Ragin (1992) by concentrating on aggregate levels of behaviour. This thesis incorporates key elements of the comparative method in its focus on macro social phenomena in four areas: intermarginality, interelectoral, interparty and interincumbency.

As part of the desire to rebalance the attention of constituency campaign research by paying attention to safe constituencies, this thesis compares *different constituency marginalities*

throughout the analysis. The clearest source of comparison between different constituency marginalities is that of marginal and safe seats. Although the primary focus is on safe constituencies, to assess whether a constituency is being neglected it is vital to have a sense of campaign levels overall, including those in marginal constituencies. The quartile-based measure of the levels of campaigning used in this thesis (based on one derived from Denver et al., 2004) relies upon data from constituencies of all marginalities to identify those which experience low levels of campaigning. It is not only the comparison between safe and marginal constituencies that will characterise the analysis; where possible the five category disaggregation of marginality will be employed, enabling not only the identification of varying levels of safety but also allowing comparisons to be made between safe constituencies Secondly, this thesis presents an *interelectoral* element through the comparison of trends across the elections from 1987 to 2010. This allows the increasing attention paid to marginal constituencies (and the increasing neglect of safe constituencies) to be measured, as well as considering the implications of such activity for local outcomes over the period.

By examining how *incumbency* affects the impact of low level campaigns on local electoral outcomes, the thesis considers not only how incumbency may enhance the level of campaigning, but whether it exaggerates the effects such campaigning has on local results. The effect of low level campaigning is also compared between the three largest *parties* in the UK. A key feature of this thesis is interparty comparison, drawing on much of the existing literature which compares campaign effectiveness across parties. It compares the different campaign strategies taken by each party, expecting that the Conservatives will have the least rational campaigning of the three parties (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b) early in the period. Of course such strategies, particularly in the case of the Liberal Democrats, are largely due to necessity: as a smaller party they do not have large resources, so have to consider carefully where they spend their money. Labour's spectacular success with targeting constituencies at the 1997 general election impacted upon their ability to rationally target their resources once they had attained power as they had such a large number of constituencies to defend.

Sources of Data

To test the hypothesis that low level campaigns are detrimental to local electoral outcomes, a variety of data sources were used. The measurements of the key concepts involved in the hypothesis (marginality, campaigning and local electoral outcomes) have already been

discussed, but here the process through which data were obtained is examined to demonstrate a lack of bias (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994:23). The reporting of the sources of the data also link to positivist ideas of replicability (Dewald, Thursby and Anderson, 1986), with the aim being to provide sufficient information that another researcher could track down and utilise (or in the case of original data collect) the sources.

Marginality and local electoral outcomes

The core sources of data enabling the measurement and tracking of both marginality (operationalised as previous vote share) and local electoral outcomes (vote share and turnout) for the period are datasets containing election results. The data come from four sources; an official record, two datasets by Pippa Norris and the work of Rallings and Thrasher.

For the 1987 election, results were obtained from Wood (1987), including full breakdowns of the vote, turnout and marginality of a constituency both going into and resulting from the election. All figures from this source were typed into SPSS from the hard copy as no other reliable data source could be found. This manual transfer of data to a dataset runs the risk of producing unintended errors. To counter this possibility, all data from this source were checked and cleaned thoroughly by running basic descriptive analyses and randomly testing constituency results.

For the 1992 to 2005 elections inclusive the source of marginality and outcome data was a constituency dataset compiled by Norris (2009), which is publicly available online and provides a breakdown of constituency results at each election as well as measures of the constituency going into each election (i.e. marginality). A separate dataset by the same author (Norris, 2010) including detailed constituency-level election results was available for the 2010 election. There were several variables from both Norris datasets that were relevant to the measurement of marginality used in this thesis, not only the figures for previous majority, but also in the inclusion of a categorical variable measuring degrees of marginality which proved to be useful in the analysis in enabling the quick identification of the safest constituencies. By disaggregating the conventional 9.99 percentage point differentiation between safe and marginal constituencies, the dataset identified a full range of marginality from ultra-marginal (a majority under 4.99 percentage points, codified as 1) to ultra-safe (a majority of 20 percentage points and above, codified as 5). Both datasets also included not only the actual vote share and turnout figures for each election between 1992 and 2005, but also gave us the raw figures for the data. I believe that these data from the two Norris

datasets offer good validity for two reasons; that other sources use them as valid data and that they represent a valid construct. Firstly, these data have a good degree of face validity and reliability as they are widely used both by other researchers as the basis for their research. The data have also been externally checked by other experts in the field; in particularly the 2010 election dataset was circulated after the election to the Elections, Public Opinion and Parties specialist group of the Political Studies Association for comments and was amended where data were found to be inaccurate.

Between 1987 and 2010 there were three major constituency boundary revisions and one minor revision (major revisions for 1997, Scottish revisions for 2005, English revisions for 2010 and a division of Milton Keynes for 1992). It is essential that data are obtained on these revisions as they impact the ability to trace constituency marginality, which is measured by examining the proximity of the two top parties *going into* an election; the closer the parties are, the more marginal the constituency. When there are boundary changes, it is not possible to get an actual figure for constituency marginality as the population has changed (even when constituencies retain their names, there can be a considerable degree of population change; for a discussion of levels of change in populations and the measurements of such see Rallings and Thrasher, 2007). Instead I use notional election results, following conventions of the existing literature which consider them to be 'widely accepted as accurate, not least by the political parties' (Johnston, Pattie, Cutts and Fisher, 2012:320). Notional figures are based on the contributory populations of the new constituency and provide a theoretical previous election result and marginality for the new boundary. These figures have been produced throughout the period by Rallings and Thrasher (1995), Denver, Rallings and Thrasher (2004), and Rallings and Thrasher (2007), and all have been incorporated into the thesis dataset. They have a good degree of face validity as they are widely used by researchers, and the media 'as the basis for determining which parties hold which seats and what change in share of the vote is required for seats to change hands' (University of Plymouth, 2007), which offers good evidence that these data are accepted as reliable by others.

Levels of campaigning

Campaigns have the ability to alter voter behaviour (whether through mobilisation or conversion) by providing information. As seen already in this chapter, existing studies of campaign effectiveness have often disagreed over the best way to measure campaigning,

whether through spending data, activity data or (as proposed in this thesis) by looking at where the leaders visit. As the thesis combines all three sources to obtain an accurate picture of what it means to run a low level campaign in UK elections, the data to measure campaigning come from a range of sources, once again combined into the master dataset.

Campaign expenditure

For the 1987, 1992 and 1997 general elections, candidate expenditure was published after each election in a report to Parliament laid down jointly by the Home Office and by the Scottish, Welsh & Northern Ireland Offices. These reports are not readily accessible, so Charles Pattie kindly supplied the data for these years. Data for the latter three elections of the period were easier to find as they occurred after the creation of the Electoral Commission; the remit of the Commission being defined in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (Great Britain, 2000). Since 2001, the Commission has collected candidate expenditure data, and provides them in detailed public reports into campaign finance (Electoral Commission, 2002; 2006; 2011) in the year after an election was held. These reports hold data on the legal maximums for each constituency, the total spending for all those standing in a constituency and breakdowns of their expenditure. The 2010 reports even provide data on donations to candidates. As comprehensive as these reports are, the accompanying datasets were not in an appropriate format to be synchronised with the master dataset used here. This entailed a full manual transcription of all candidate expenditure data for these three elections. To prevent errors, the data were once again cleaned and random comparisons and frequencies were run until their reliability was certain.

As constituencies have different spending limits according to their size and location, the raw continuous-level data of spending by candidates supplied by both Pattie and the Electoral Commission needed to be expressed differently to account for the different legal maximums in operation. Following the example of existing constituency campaigning studies (Pattie, Johnston and Fieldhouse, 1995 for example), the spending data were expressed as the percentage of the legal maximum spent by the candidate.

Campaign activity

This thesis also uses selected variables taken from the party agent surveys as part of the measurement of constituency campaign levels. Agent survey data were chosen over party member data for two reasons; firstly, the agent survey data were publicly accessible, and secondly, the agent surveys were conducted in much closer proximity to the election campaign, offering better grounds for participant recall.

The surveys of constituency party agents were conducted by Denver and Hands in 1992 (1996: SN 3587) and 1997 (1999: SN 3922) and Denver, Hands and Fisher in 2001 (2002: SN 4508) to investigate various aspects of the constituency campaign before, during and after the election. The results are publically available and are available for download from the Data Archive. The datasets for each of the three years were downloaded and divided according to which of the three main parties the agents belonged to, making using the data simpler. The names of variables were changed to identify the parties (i.e. Canvass became CCanvass, LCanvass and LDCanvass) and the data from the agent surveys were combined into the master dataset. The Press Association number was the only way of identifying the constituency, so this was used as the basis for identifying responding constituencies. Data were available for both the 2005 and 2010 elections, but there were issues regarding data access and attribution. The 2005 data were not publicly accessible and attempts to obtain the data from the researchers did not come to any fruition. The 2010 data are publicly accessible, once again via Data Archive, but they were unable to be used in this thesis because the Press Association numbers were removed. This meant that there was now no way of identifying constituencies of responding agents, which made the incorporation of the data into the dataset impossible.

These surveys provided a mixture of nominal, ordinal and ratio and interval level data which identified a wide range of information about the local campaign; from the level of support they felt they had received to a detailed account of the levels of various campaign activities. A wide range of such activities were measured, including the number of polling day helpers, the number of locally-produced leaflets distributed and the percentage of the constituency covered by an active local organisation.

Party Leader Visits

As an additional variable measuring constituency campaigning, proposed here for the first time in the UK, leader visits offered an opportunity to collect original data. The main source was the BBC rolling news coverage during the 2010 general election campaign which offered detailed 24-hour coverage of the campaign including a news ticker. The newsfeed on the BBC website was regularly (several times a day) checked for mentions of any visits being made by the three main party leaders. Often when there was mention of a visit the details were vague – for example 'David Cameron visited a school in Brighton' – which necessitated a degree of background research. Initially the data obtained from the BBC were cross-referenced against other sources including official party websites and other media outlets such as local and national newspapers to identify the precise location of the visit. Postcodes for the locations were generated (if required) from the Royal Mail's 'Postcode Finder' before the constituency was identified through the BBC website which offered a 'Find your Constituency' search function (BBC 2010b). It would be simple to replicate this data collection at future elections.

Data were collected for the short campaign, using the day Gordon Brown asked the Queen to dissolve Parliament and call an election (6 April) as the start, and the day prior to Election Day as the end (5 May) as no campaigning can take place on Election Day itself. Various elements of the campaign involving the leaders were excluded from my data collection because they were not visits as such – for example, press conferences from party headquarters or the location of the televised leader debates were not classified as visits. I also noted the type of location each party leader was visiting, dividing them into basic categories. This resulted in data on 166 visits by the three main party leaders over the short election campaign. The data collection during the campaign provided a range of both nominal and interval level data. Three binary variables were created to identify constituencies visited by each of the three party leaders; a nominal measure was also created which codified the type of visits that the leaders were making.

Census data

To accurately test the relationships between marginality and campaign intensity and campaign intensity and electoral outcomes in the two stages of the hypothesis, sufficient controls should be incorporated into the models used. The previous chapter has explored theoretical explanations for voter behaviour and presented evidence for the presence not only of rational choice models, but also sociological and socio-psychological models in UK voter behaviour. To control for other explanations of local electoral outcomes aside from the impact of campaigning, a series of socio-demographic variables are included in the models (the full selection of which is presented in later chapters).

To sufficiently control for constituency socio-demographics, census data which represent comprehensive coverage of the UK population (and therefore an accurate picture of the social composition of constituencies) were utilised as a data source. Census data were collected and collated from three main sources for the period; the Norris datasets (2009; 2010), the Office for National Statistics (2003) and the Census Dissemination Unit (UK Data Service Census Support, 2011). Data applying to to constituency boundaries from 1997 to 2010 (drawing on data from the closest preceding census: here 1991 and 2001) were already included in the Norris datasets, which have already been discussed in the section on marginality and local electoral outcomes above. There were, however, no socio-demographic data on Scottish and Welsh constituencies included, so the data were supplemented by constituency profiles from the Office for National Statistics (2003).

This left missing census data relating only to the 1987 and 1992 constituency boundaries. The Census Dissemination Unit stores census data for the United Kingdom from the 1971 census onwards. To obtain the relevant census data for 1987 and 1992 I used the Casweb interface (UK Data Service Census Support, 2011), which allows bespoke census data to be selected for each census year. In the 1991 and 1981 census data available (i.e. those most relevant to the 1987 and 1992 elections) here, it is not possible to select data on a constituency basis – the only way of collecting data is on a ward by ward basis. This therefore necessitated the identification of the wards constituting the constituencies in 1987 and 1992, which originated from a constituency boundary change prior to the 1983 election. Crewe and Fox (1984) produced a comprehensive account of the 1983 constituency boundary changes, including notional results and a full breakdown of the wards that made up

each constituency, which enabled the selection of relevant wards from Casweb. Once these had been selected, the interface enables the researcher to download a range of variables of interest from the census. The selection chosen reflected the variables that had already been collected by Norris (2009, 2010) for the later results to enable comparisons to be made across the period. The data were then downloaded and came in a ward-by-ward form, so the sum for each variable was calculated across the wards for the constituency before being transferred to the master dataset.

The data collection for the census data has resulted in a series of continuous variables on a wide range of demographics, from basic population size to employment figures, social class to migration. From these data, the figures have been calculated as a percentage of the total population. By doing this the size differences between constituencies are neutralised and as a result it is possible to compare demographics. I believe that these census data offer a good degree of validity as they are widely used, not only in the examination of voting behaviour, but in many applications. A census is 'a complete and individual enumeration of all persons in a fixed geographical area at a single point in time carried out by a central government' (Marsh, 1982: 5), which I believe greatly enhances its reliability. The completion of the census return is a legal requirement, enforceable by fines, and as such the data collected are very comprehensive. Also, the census data incorporated into the Norris dataset have been utilised by other researchers in the field.

Candidate Incumbency and Tenure

As set out in Box 3.1, the nested hypotheses explore the impact of candidate incumbency on the effects of low level campaigns. Using the premise that the incumbent candidate was the candidate with the largest vote share at the last instance of electoral competition, whether this was at an election or a by-election, the data on incumbency came from two sources. The first group were the *Times Guides to the House of Commons* (Wood, 1987; 1992; 1997) which between 1987 and 1997 collected biographies listing the career history of all candidates that stood in all constituencies. The second group of sources were *Dod's Parliamentary Companions* (Cox, 1988; Bedford, 1993; 1998; 2002; 2005; 2010) which provide annual biographies of all MPs.

Once the incumbent candidate at the last competition had been identified, this was compared to the candidate standing at the subsequent election to see whether the incumbent had retired.

If they had not, the biographies contained in the two sources were referred to in order to identify firstly how long they had been the incumbent in the constituency, and secondly how long in total they had been an incumbent. It is important to differentiate between these two types of tenure because of the complications of boundary changes. The seat tenure variable created measures the length of time an incumbent has been in place in that seat with the same boundaries, whereas the career tenure variable measures the total length of the incumbent candidate's career. The ability to differentiate between seat and career tenure is vital because although many boundary changes were minor (see Rallings and Thrasher, 2007) and MPs often remained in their largely unchanged constituencies, there are frequent examples where changes are more extreme – MPs changing seats or even fighting each other for the same seat in the case of Sarah Teather and Dawn Butler in Brent in 2010. The biographies also listed all preceding constituencies that incumbents had represented, thereby enabling career tenures to be calculated. Therefore I not only have the measure of seat tenure, but also a measure of the incumbent MP's total career encompassing all boundary changes. An additional incumbency variable identifying all candidates who are fighting their first election as incumbent (first-termers) was also created.

The data collected to measure incumbency and tenure were at both the ordinal and interval level. Dummy variables were collected which measured whether the incumbent candidate won, what gender they were, whether the sitting incumbent had retired, whether the candidate was fighting the election as a first-term MP and whether there had been a by-election. Ordinal level variables were also created which indicated which party the incumbent belonged to. These data offer a good level of validity, as there is a range of different measures to examine as many facets of the concept as possible. There is also a good level of external validity as it is possible to replicate the data from the sources easily. These data on candidate incumbency and tenure also offer a reliable source for data which can later be used effectively as a control because of the reputation of the data sources and the representativeness of the data. Both sources are highly regarded as good-quality sources of information about Parliament and elections, and print short biographies of each candidate, noting whether they have been in parliament previously and for what duration.

Data Analysis

SPSS, one of the main statistical programmes used in both academic and business environments, has been used to both build the master dataset from a wide range of sources and to analyse these data. To effectively handle these data and produce a sophisticated statistical response to the hypotheses, training was undertaken; this comprised not only of university run courses (Core Quantitative Data Analysis), but also online tutorials (Edx, 2011) and additional specific training on advanced techniques. The thesis research questions (see Box 3.1) compare general trends in low level campaign effects (on vote share and turnout) over the period, but also specifically compare parties and candidate incumbency. These factors influenced the construction of the master dataset, creating one that combined data for all years, enabling direct comparisons to be made across the period, alongside a more focused engagement with relationships and election years as necessary. It was designed so analyses could be run across the entire period, enabling the identification of trends and potential relationships to be investigated in more detail.

Chapter Analysis Structure

Chapter four begins by exploring the variable of marginality descriptively, examining patterns in the data along with mean values and standard deviations. These descriptive findings are primarily presented in graph format, providing a visual introduction to the variable. The chapter ends with a series of bivariate correlations and a regression between variables representing stability and party support bases in order to gather information regarding the origins of marginality. The fifth chapter, on campaigns, also begins by exploring the various measures of campaigning descriptively, before progressing to a bivariate analysis of the relationship between marginality and campaigning, as well as other variables which could affect campaigning drawn from existing literature. By using bivariate correlations in examining the relationship between these continuous variables, it has been possible to discern the shape, direction and significance of potential relationships. Although these correlations are only a rough estimate of such a relationship, they have been used to draw attention to variables which may need to be controlled for in a more detailed analysis of campaigning. This not only provides an idea of the basic trends in the dependent variables

over the period and ideas regarding what variables might affect them, but also gives a broad indication of whether there is a relationship between the marginality and campaigning. A multivariate regression model is then constructed to examine the relationship between marginality and campaigning, incorporating additional variables which were found to be significantly correlated with campaigning at the bivariate level. These extra variables act as controls, ensuring the variation in the dependent variable (campaigning) originates from the independent variable (marginality).

Alternative combinations of control variables were tested, informed by the literature, and the model which provided the best explanatory power was chosen. Throughout the thesis, when referring to levels of significance, I shall be working to $p<.05$* and $p<.01$** which will be indicated as such throughout the analysis. These levels of significance are appropriate as they are the conventionally accepted standards (Argyrous, 2005) in the social sciences for proving significant relationships. By working to high levels of significance the reliability of the data can be improved by ensuring that the relationships observed are not occurring by chance. Tests of significance 'estimate…the likelihood that a particular sample result differs from an assumed population level due to sampling error' (De Vaus, 2002:169). Such tests enable inferences to be made from a sample to the wider population. However, there is a complication in the application of tests of significance in the context of this study. Whereas such tests are designed to indicate the likelihood that the results of a sample result from an error in sampling, in this thesis data are available for the entire population. Of the operationalisations of campaigning explored earlier in this chapter, this study relies primarily on expenditure data. Such data are available for all constituencies at all elections and there is no need to rely on a sample. Therefore, it could be argued that tests of significance are not required in the present study.

Existing studies operationalising campaigning through the use of expenditure data continue to employ tests of statistical significance (see Johnston and Pattie, 2008; Pattie, Johnston and Fieldhouse, 1995). As this study extends the conventional hypothesis regarding the impact of campaigning, using expenditure data as the primary operationalization of campaigning, it is important for the findings to be as comparable with existing literature as possible. This has led to the retention of tests of significance in the present study.

It is also vital in establishing a sound quantitative research design to incorporate elements of uncertainty (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994); so the regressions produced aim to explain as much of the variation in the dependent variable as possible with the independent variable,

but it is unlikely (as in most statistical studies, and certainly in the case of research into UK constituency campaigning) that a full 100 percent of variation will be able to be explained, thus establishing a degree of uncertainty. The quartile-based measure of campaigning based on Denver et al's 2004 study (discussed in section one above) is also tested against marginality.

Multiplicative interaction terms are also included in the models formulated for this thesis. Such terms indicate interactions between two independent variables, which alter the effect upon the dependent variable. This is particularly important in the context of this thesis, which binds together marginality, campaigning and local electoral outcomes. There are two separate groups of interaction terms included in the analysis in the chapters ahead. In chapter five, which links marginality and levels of campaigning, an interaction term has been included between marginality and the length of the incumbent's career. More centrally in regards to the thesis hypothesis, the models tested in chapters six and seven include interaction terms between marginality and the various campaigning variables when examining the relationship between campaigning levels and local electoral outcomes (turnout and vote share). This interaction term is central to this thesis, not least because of the argument that marginality is an important determinant in campaigning levels, by linking safe constituencies with lower levels of campaigning. Therefore, in these models examining the impact of campaigning levels on local electoral outcomes (which are going to differ according to constituency safety), the interacting effect of constituency marginality will be accounted for. Further explanations of the rationale behind these two sets of interaction terms will be considered in the forthcoming chapters.

Such terms will be employed following best practice in empirical analysis as established by Brambor, Clark and Golder (2005). They are calculated simply by multiplying the interacting variables together, and where these terms are used in models, both constituent variables are also entered into the model to prevent bias. Only on the basis of sound theoretical probability that one of the constituent variables 'has no effect on the dependent variable in the absence of the other modifying variable' (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005:6) may a constituent variable be excluded from the regression model. Each chapter using interaction terms in the models explores the relationship of both constituent terms to the dependent variable, and in each case there are no grounds for exclusion.

The interpretation of models also changes when using interaction effects. When they are utilised, the regression coefficients for the independent variable (one of the constituent

terms) adjust to capture the effect of this variable on the dependent variable when the interacting variable is zero, and the discussions of these variables in the forthcoming chapters should be interpreted as such. This complicates the interpretation of the results from the tables, and it is possible for the impact of the interacting variable to be significant without it being indicated by the regression coefficient. All interaction effects will be explored and discussed in more detail in the text.

Chapters six, seven and eight all follow similar analytical frameworks, with a funnelling of analysis from descriptive to multivariate models. Turnout and vote share are engaged with descriptively in chapter six and seven, before drawing on existing literature to examine variables other than campaigning which might explain variation in them. These theories are tested with bivariate correlations, before the relationship between campaigning (a continuous measure and the low level classification) and the dependent variable of the chapter is developed into a multivariate model. This model is kept consistent between all three chapters to increase comparability, incorporating control variables as established in the bivariate analysis. Leader visits are treated slightly differently, establishing a link between these visits as the independent variable and local electoral outcomes as the dependent variable. This funnelling of analysis from descriptive to bivariate to multivariate allows campaigning, vote share, turnout and leader visits to be engaged with in some detail before constructing a model which takes a range of control variables into account.

Conclusion

This thesis attempts to investigate whether a relative lack of campaigning in safe constituencies is detrimental to constituency outcomes. As such, this chapter has clearly defined not only what the research questions are, but also the best strategy for answering them and with what data. The interrelated hypotheses have been set out, firstly establishing the origins of marginality, considering then whether there is a link between constituency safety and campaign intensity, and finally by examining what impact a relative lack of campaigning has on two dimensions of electoral outcomes (vote share and turnout). This thesis is rooted in the positivist tradition, with its emphasis on empirical testing, establishing causality and replicability. A quantitative data analysis has been undertaken as it offers the most appropriate approach with which to answer the thesis hypotheses, and traditionally fits

well with a positivist strategy. A range of data originating from a wide range of sources have been used in this study, including election results, census data, leader visit data and data on candidate incumbency. The origin and collection of these data in each case has been clearly explained to make this study as replicable as possible. The data have provided many forms of variables, from nominal to continuous, and where appropriate, transformations have been conducted to make the data more useable. Finally, this chapter explored the ways in which these data have been analysed, including why some data were being excluded. Trends in independent and dependent variables are investigated thoroughly, before a variety of variables with the potential to affect the dependent variable are tested. A detailed plan for the data analysis to be undertaken in this thesis was made clear, and as such the conclusions that are drawn from the analytical techniques used in this thesis offer a good level of both validity and reliability. The next chapter begins the empirical analysis of the thesis by measuring and testing marginality in order to understand what it means to be a safe constituency in the UK today.

Chapter 4
Marginality

As explained in chapter one, both the media and academic researchers of constituency campaigning in the UK habitually focus upon marginal constituencies. Political parties in the UK have limited resources to use at election time (whether physical or financial), which necessitates careful consideration of where best to deploy them. Much is made of marginal seats by the media both in the lead up to (for example Wintour, 2013) and during (Chivers, 2010) election campaigns; although this is understandable as these constituencies are those most vulnerable to changing hands (and ultimately the party with the most seats wins power, Gallagher and Mitchell 2005). Existing research into the effectiveness of constituency campaigning (see Hands and Denver, 2004; Pattie and Johnston, 2009a) has echoed this, with researchers using marginal constituencies as their primary point of interest.

This attention on marginal constituencies indicates the importance of marginality as a concept in contemporary UK general elections. It is also of vital importance to this thesis as it enables the identification of safe and marginal constituencies, central in a thesis that considers the potential impact of a lack of campaigning in safe constituencies. But what does marginality actually mean? Constituency marginality measures the relative degree of vulnerability to seat turnover. Jacobson (1987) operationalised it as the distance in vote share between the winning party and the party (or parties) in second place. The further apart the two parties are (i.e. the larger the majority), the safer the constituency, and vice versa. An important point to note is that the concept does not only refer to marginal constituencies, but rather to the *full spectrum* of vote proximity, from the most marginal to the safest. Conventionally the differentiation between safe and marginal constituencies (i.e. those more or less vulnerable to turnover) is simple in the UK context, with constituencies holding a majority of 9.99 percentage points and below classed as marginal, and those with a majority of 10 percentage points and above classified as safe. This cut-off was empirically tested by Cornford and Dorling (1997), and it was found to be remarkably accurate in identifying constituencies with a greater probability of changing hands.

This chapter engages with not only what marginality means, but also offers evidence of its character, including its fluidity and origins. In short, this chapter provides the foundation for the rest of the analysis in this thesis by attempting to understand what types of constituencies are safe and marginal. It begins by considering the fundamental elements of marginality; in

defining the concept as a measure of vulnerability, the two operationalisations of marginality (vote proximity and seat turnover) are discussed with particular emphasis on seat turnover. Drawing on the (limited) existing literature, the merits of each element are appraised, before being applied to the data. The next section engages in detail with marginality in the UK between 1987 and 2010, using the conventional 9.99 percentage point cut-off to identify safe and marginal seats, with an additional five category disaggregation around it identifying degrees of marginality from ultra-marginal (4.99 or below) to ultra-safe (20 and above). By studying marginality over the period, this chapter argues that safe constituencies deserve greater attention from political parties and academic researchers because they consistently represent approximately the majority of all constituencies. When looking specifically at the ultra-safe constituencies (the safest category of all), this category alone represents around half of all seats.

The third section of this chapter examines the fluid nature of marginality as a concept; an aspect which has remained implicit in existing research. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, the changing nature of marginality in my home constituency first excited my interest in safe seats: marginal constituencies do not always remain marginal, and safe constituencies are not always safe. This section traces marginality between 1987 and 2010 in two constituencies (the Isle of Wight and the Western Isles) not affected by boundary changes, demonstrating that constituencies quite often move between safe and marginal.

The research here enables a more detailed understanding to be made of marginality by bringing together the limited research on marginality and applying empirical analysis to answer the first thesis sub-hypothesis that *constituency marginality originates in the local population.* In answering this, two additional hypotheses in regards to constituency characteristics associated with marginality are explored. The first, *safe constituencies have a higher proportion of traditional party support bases than marginal constituencies,* takes its influence from sociological theories of voter behaviour as set out in chapter two. Even in contemporary UK politics, it is possible to trace elements of sociological voter behaviour, with working class voters being more likely to vote Labour, whereas home-owners are more likely to vote Conservative (Dunleavy, 1979). These theories have been extended in this chapter to explain the origins of marginality by indicating that constituencies which contain the largest proportions of social groups traditionally associated with support for a particular party are more likely to be safe for that party. The second, *safe constituencies have more stable populations than marginal constituencies*, draws on the idea that regularly fluctuating levels of party support increase the likelihood of a seat being marginal. Safe constituencies

would therefore have largely stable populations, ensuring that levels of party support remain fairly constant. By using the influence of Putnam (1966) social groups which represent stable elements of the population can be identified and compared to marginality.

Measuring Marginality

Marginality is a concept which can be used in many different ways in the social sciences, but particularly in measuring exclusion; from investigating social groups side-lined by society (Sibley, 1995) to the distance between centre and periphery in outlying regions (Huskey and Morehouse, 1992). In electoral politics, the concept means something quite different – instead of expressing exclusion, marginality measures the spectrum of constituency vulnerability to turnover (changing hands between parties) at an election (Jacobson, 1987), operationalised as the distance between the top two parties. The vote proximity of these parties enables a differentiation to be made between constituencies more vulnerable to turnover (marginal) and those which are perceived of as less likely to change hands (safe). This differentiation is based upon a conventional split of vote proximity, with constituencies where the previous majority is 9.99 percentage points or below classed as marginal, and constituencies where the majority is 10 percentage points or above are safe (Curtice and Steed, 1986:213; Lightbown and Mellows-Facer, 2009). If the top three parties are all within 20% of each other, then a constituency is classed as a three-way marginal (Lightbown, 2008). The conventional binary classification using the 9.99 percentage point cut-off has been extended by parties and researchers (Norris, 2009; 2010) to provide more detail, most commonly into a five category classification once again based on the vote proximity of the top two parties. These categories range from ultra-marginal (seats with a majority of 4.99 percentage points and below), progressing in regular increments (with 9.99 retained as the cut-off between marginal and safe constituencies) to ultra-safe seats (those with a majority of 20 percentage points and above). For example, going into the 2010 general election, the most marginal constituency (ultra-marginal) was Gillingham and Rainham with a majority of 0.03 percentage points (15 votes), whereas the safest seat (ultra-safe) was Easington with a majority of 58.39 (equating to 18,874 votes). Marginality not only identifies if a constituency is safe, but indicates exactly how safe it is and consequently what impact this might have on the campaign – a constituency facing an election with a majority of 15 votes will have a different electoral experience from a constituency with a majority of almost 19,000.

Testing the role of seat turnover in the definition of marginality

Seat turnover is vital to change in a FPTP system which relies on simple majorities, which is why it forms such an important part of the concept of marginality. As Lutz (1991:721) argues, it is the 'local nature of competition' in the UK which makes marginality so important in FPTP systems. Whereas in proportional systems, the election result is decided on the basis of the national vote share (Gallagher and Mitchell, 2005), in simple majority systems like the UK, winning at the local level matters as the party who wins the most constituencies wins power. However, this is not to say that marginality does not exist in other systems, just that it does not have the same impact. For example, in the 2002 general election in Ireland (Kavanagh, 2005:5) in which a Single Transferable Vote system is in use, there were seven constituencies where the candidate won by an extremely small margin (in Limerick West there was a single vote).

Curtice and Steed (1986:216) attributed marginality to electoral geography, with the migration of social classes from urban to rural environments making constituencies more likely to be safe. This migration was 'class selective' (Curtice and Steed 1982: 261) and created territorial cleavages which they linked to the drop in constituencies changing hands at elections. Norris and Crewe challenged this, proposing that marginality was one important element, but not the sole factor in causing a constituency to change hands; rather it was a combination of factors including incumbency and swing. They also provided evidence that despite the decline in marginal constituencies, constituencies continued to change hands.

This thesis draws links between marginality and seat turnover; marginality is a measure of vulnerability and seats are vulnerable to seat turnover. To demonstrate the salience of seat turnover as a component of marginality, a dataset for all six elections under was created which included a binary variable indicating whether a constituency had changed hands. This variable was entered into an independent samples t-test as the grouping variable, with the test variable being previous majority (i.e. a measure of the proximity of the first and second parties). The results of this independent samples t-test demonstrate a significant difference in the mean previous vote shares between constituencies that changed hands at elections between 1987 and 2010. For constituencies which had changed hands, the average vote proximity was 9.87%, which interestingly fits well into the arbitrary definition of marginal constituencies. In contrast, the average vote share for constituencies that did not change

hands over the period was considerably higher at 23.14%. The t-test statistic (28.99**) demonstrates that this difference in vote proximity between seats that changed hands and those that did not is significant. Therefore, the evidence indicates that constituencies which changed hands at elections between 1987 and 2010 tended to be significantly more marginal than those that did not.

To examine this in more detail, the continuous measure of marginality (previous majorities) used above was divided into the five disaggregated categories of marginality from ultra-marginal (up to 4.99 majority) to ultra-safe (20 majority and above). This enables an examination to be made of how marginal or safe the constituencies changing hands are. Table 4.1 displays the cross tabulations between these five categories and the binary variable indicating seat turnover, with the expectation, drawing on the role of vote proximity in the concept of marginality, that ultra-marginal constituencies had the highest rate of seat turnover and ultra-safe constituencies had the lowest rate. As expected, the results from the table show that the safer the seat, the lower the proportion of constituencies that changed hands. For ultra-marginal constituencies, 30.8% of constituencies over the entire period changed hands, against 5.1% of ultra-safe constituencies. The results of a chi-square conducted for the variables (x^2= 294.311**) also indicates that these differences between the five categories are significant.

Table 4.1: Seat turnover and five categories of marginality 1987-2010

	Ultra-Marginal	Very marginal	Fairly safe	Very safe	Ultra-safe
Turnover	30.8% (134)	24.1% (112)	13.5% (67)	10.4% (54)	5.1% (96)
No Change	69.2% (301)	75.9% (352)	86.5% (428)	89.6% (465)	94.9% (1792)
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

As the table makes clear, it is not possible to state that all constituencies that change hands are marginal. Even though in comparison to more marginal categories of constituency the figure of 5.1% of ultra-safe constituencies changing hands is miniscule, this still means that between 1987 and 2010, 96 constituencies in the safest possible category changed hands, averaging 16 such seats turning over at each election. In terms of the general trend though,

these results indicate that seat turnover is an important factor in defining constituency marginality, with marginal constituencies significantly more likely to change hands.

The concept of marginality encompasses measures of how vulnerable constituencies are to changing hands during elections by measuring the vote proximity of the top two parties. It is clear that marginal constituencies are more likely than safe constituencies to change hands, particularly when looking at the extremes of the spectrum of marginality. Following the example of conventional differentiations between marginal and safe seats, as well as different categories of marginality, this thesis uses the 9.99 percentage point cut-off to identify safe constituencies, as well as the associated five category disaggregation. The use of this data is influenced by the testing of Cornford and Dorling (1997) as well as a desire to make this study comparable to existing research into constituency campaigning.

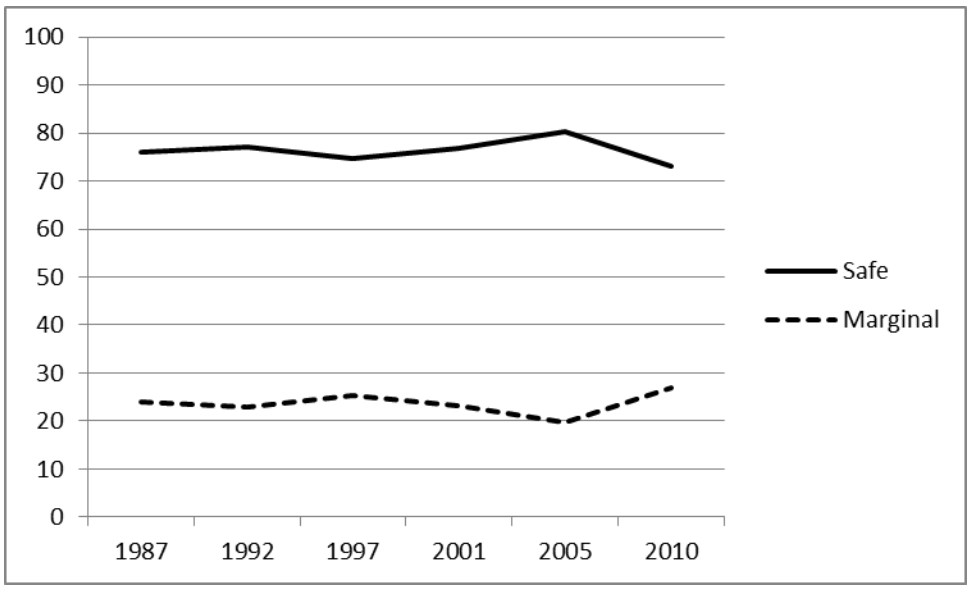
The state of marginality in the UK 1987-2010

Historically, safe constituencies have comprised the majority of seats in the UK, with Curtice and Steed (1986:214) concluding that at elections between 1955 and 1983, not only were the majority of constituencies safe, but their numbers were increasing. Over this time period the percentage of constituencies classified as safe had actually risen from 72.8% and peaked at 86.8 percent going into the 1983 election. They concluded as 'extremely unlikely' (1986: 216) the prospect of any reversal of this decline in the number of marginal seats. This was echoed by studies on Congressional Elections in the USA, where authors (Mayhew, 1974; Cover and Mayhew, 1977) discovered that the number of competitive Congressional districts had declined considerably. These conclusions should be interpreted with some caution however; as discussed above, Curtice and Steed use a slightly different definition of marginality more appropriate for two party politics and the American studies also rely on a two-party definition. Norris and Crewe (1994:216) examined the growth in safe constituencies using the more conventional 9.99 percentage point cut-off used in this thesis, discovering that between 1983 and 1992 the number of safe constituencies had risen by five percentage points. Nevertheless, the basis of the argument is clear: safe constituencies have historically represented the majority of constituencies in the UK.

Graph 4.1 examines the frequency of safe and marginal constituencies at elections between 1987 and 2010 by using a binary variable identifying safe and marginal constituencies

according to the 9.99 percentage point cut-off. Once again, where there had been large-scale boundary changes prior to the 1997, 2005 and 2010 general elections, notional majorities were used.

Graph 4.1: Marginal and safe constituencies 1987-2010



Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Results are %

The results show that safe constituencies have consistently comprised the vast majority of constituencies in the UK at each election during the period. During all election campaigns except 1997 and 2010, safe constituencies represented over three-quarters of all UK constituencies, and for those two years they still represented over 73% of constituencies. The peak in the number of safe seats was going into the 2005 election campaign when they comprised 80.4% of all constituencies, but at the 2010 campaign there was a drop of 7.3 percentage points in the number of safe seats to 73.1%, the lowest percentage of safe seats over the period. Nevertheless, in 2010 there were still 291 more safe constituencies than marginal, despite this fall in the number of safe seats. Curtice and Steed (1986:218) observed patterns in marginality between 1955 and 1983 and had seen a significant rise in the number of safe seats to a peak of 86.8% during the 1983 campaign. They believed that the number of marginal constituencies would continue to decline from 1983 onwards until early in the 21st century when they would comprise no more than 5 percent of seats. This is not borne out by the evidence, with the proportion of marginal and safe constituencies remaining generally stable and reinforced by evidence from the USA (Jacobson, 1987). Caution should be taken here as the definition of safe and marginal constituencies as used by the authors is slightly different from the one used in this thesis, referring as it does to an era of two-party politics.

That the decline in marginal constituencies has not been as steep as Curtice and Steed envisaged could also be attributed to another factor: the growth of third party politics. What were the relatively small Social Democrat and Liberal parties at the time of their writing have grown considerably, firstly under the banner of the SDP-Liberal Alliance before their merger which created the Liberal Democrats in March 1988 (Whiteley, Seyd and Billingshurst, 2006), in addition to Plaid Cymru, the Scottish National Party and the Green Party, who gained their first MP Caroline Lucas in 2010 (BBC, 2010a). It would be reasonable to assume that the increased popularity of these smaller parties has divided the old two-party support amongst a greater number of parties, and would therefore increase the number of marginal constituencies. There is more scope for seats to change hands in multiparty systems, as multiple parties presents voters with a wider range of policy positions to pick from (as envisaged by Downs, 1957), dispersing the vote. This would make it far more difficult for constituencies to be safe, yet this is difficult to assess as parties may not compete across a multiparty system (Linzer, 2012: 402). In the UK, safe seats still represent the majority of constituencies, and this proportion has been relatively stable between 1987 and 2010. One explanation for this is that the relative stability observed in the numbers of safe and marginal constituencies could actually be interpreted as an arrested decline in the number of marginal constituencies. Researchers like Curtice and Steed predicted the continuing fall in the number of marginal constituencies, but the growth of smaller parties has offset this and kept the numbers relatively stable.

Despite the vast majority of constituencies in the UK being safe, this is not reflected in the attention paid to them by existing literature on constituency campaigning (see Cutts, 2011; Fisher and Denver, 2009); rather it is the comparatively small number of marginal constituencies that receive disproportionate attention. This of course, is logical; if a study is seeking to examine whether campaigning is effective, then it is reasonable to concentrate on those seats where it is intense. Yet the sheer volume of safe constituencies at elections over the period offers persuasive evidence for why they deserve more attention. To examine the proportions of safe and marginal constituencies in further detail, table 4.2 takes the basic data distinguishing safe and marginal constituencies set out in graph 4.1 above with the 9.99 percentage point cut-off between the definitions and disaggregates the data into the five categories explained in the section above to examine exactly how safe constituencies are.

Table 4.2: Constituencies in the five categories of marginality 1987-2010

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Ultra marginal (0-4.99%)	12.0 (76)	11.7 (74)	11.7 (75)	10.0 (66)	7.8 (49)	15.1 (95)
Very marginal (5-9.99%)	11.9 (75)	11.2 (71)	13.4 (86)	12.6 (83)	11.8 (74)	11.9 (75)
Fairly safe (10-14.99%)	12.5 (79)	12.5 (79)	11.1 (71)	12.9 (85)	15.8 (99)	13.0 (82)
Very safe (15-19.99%)	13.1 (83)	12.5 (79)	14.1 (90)	11.1 (73)	13.1 (82)	17.7 (112)
Ultra safe (20% +)	50.5 (319)	51.7 (328)	49.7 (318)	50.6 (333)	51.5 (323)	42.3 (267)

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804. N in parentheses

The data reveal that not only are the vast majority of constituencies in the UK consistently safe, the majority of constituencies are ultra-safe (highlighted in the table). Therefore, during election campaigns between 1987 and 2010, most constituencies in the UK had a majority of 20 percentage points and above. Indeed during the period many constituencies had majorities well above this; going into the 2010 election alone, Rhondda had a majority of 52.14 percentage points (16,242 votes), and Barnsley East's majority was 56.94 percentage points (18,298 votes) for example. Of the six elections under examination, ultra-safe constituencies represented over half of all constituencies at four of them. The highest proportion of ultra-safe constituencies was found at the 1992 election at 51.7%, and the lowest during the 2010 campaign at 42.3% which still represents the largest number of constituencies in the five categories by twofold.

Vote proximity is important to the concept of marginality, and it is interesting to explore the type of competition between the parties in first and second place. Table 4.3 displays battleground categories codified for the period. These categories cover all types of competition – from safe constituencies, to two and three-way marginal seats. Types of political battlegrounds in marginal constituencies have some continuity and fluctuation over the period. Overall, a marginal constituency in the period 1987 to 2010 was most likely to be a battleground between the Conservatives and Labour (with either party first or second). This is unsurprising - it not only confirms their status as the two major political parties in the

United Kingdom, but also reflects trends in national incumbency. For example, marginal seats in which the Conservatives held first place and Labour were second peaked at the 1992 election. This peak, combined with the retrospective knowledge that the Conservatives were to lose the following election, suggests that some constituencies which had previously been safe (which as the Conservatives were the nationally incumbent party, were more likely to be Conservative held) had become marginal.

Table 4.3: Types of constituency battlegrounds

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Safe	76.1 (1.5)	76.8 (4)	74.7 (19.7)	76.7 (1.2)	78.8 (2.8)	73.1 (7.6)
Marginal						
Con/Lab	4.0 (12.0)	7.2 (40)	10.2 (100)	5.8 (0)	4.1 (0)	4.0 (0)
Con/Lib	1.9 ((16.7)	2.3 (26.7)	1.7 (100)	2.5 (18.8)	2.6 (18.8)	2.4 (20)
Con/Other	0.6 (100)	0.2 (0)	0.5 (100)	N/A	0.2 (0)	N/A
Lab/Con	4.9 (6.5)	6.1 (2.5)	9.4 (0)	8.0 (11.8)	7.8 (53.1)	9.4 (84.7)
Lab/Lib	N/A	0.5 (0)	0.3 (0)	0.3 (0)	0.5 (66.7)	1.0 (0)
Lab/Other	N/A	0.2 (0)	N/A	0.3 (50)	0.3 (100)	0.3 (50)
Lib/Con	0.9 (33.3)	0.8 (0)	0.8 (0)	2.0 (15.4)	2.1 (15.4)	2.4 (26.7)
Lib/Lab	N/A	0.5 (0)	0.2 (100)	0.2 (0)	0.2 (0)	1.1 (14.3)
Lib/Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.2 (0)
Other	N/A	0.11 (14.2)	0.3 (0)	0.2 (0)	0.2 (0)	.06 (50)
3-way marginal	11.6 (32.9)	4.5 (27.6)	2.0 (46.2)	4.1 (7.7)	3.3 (28.6)	5.7 (47.2)

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
Note: 9.99% cut-off point between safe and marginal constituencies used. Percentage changing hands in parentheses

Going into the 1987 election, marginal seats were most likely to be three-way, making up 11.6% of seats, with Lab/Con and Con/Lab seats in second and third place. However, by the 1992 election, the percentage of three-way marginal seats had more than halved to 4.5%. Instead, marginal constituencies were most likely to be either Con/Lab (7.2%) or Lab/Con

(6.2%) seats. This pattern of three-way marginal seats being the third most likely category of marginal constituencies behind constituencies battling between Labour and Conservative holds for the rest of the period.

Tracing marginality over time

Safe seats should not be taken for granted by political parties or researchers; an underappreciated aspect of marginality is its fluidity, with constituencies not only changing hands, but also varying in their degree of marginality over time. To illustrate this fluidity in more detail, the marginality histories of two constituencies have been tracked across the 1987 to 2010 period.

Between 1987 and 2010 there have been several major boundary changes (prior to the 1997, 2005 and 2010 elections) which dramatically reduce the number of constituencies in which it was possible to trace marginality. These changes mean that very few constituency populations have covered identical geographical areas over the entire period. Some changes have been relatively minor (such as the movement of a single ward to another constituency), while others have rendered existing constituencies unrecognisable (for example York Outer, a major restructuring of three constituencies for the 2010 election); a measure of degrees of change has been calculated for all boundary changes over the period by Rallings and Thrasher (1995, 2007) and Denver, Rallings and Thrasher (2004). Constituency boundaries are changed to reflect the 'continuing population movement from the cities into more rural areas' (Rallings and Thrasher, 2007:3), and they matter when tracing marginality because they offer a defined space in which to measure voter behaviour. To illustrate the fluidity of marginality over time, two constituencies that have seen their boundaries remain unchanged between 1987 and 2010 have been selected: the Isle of Wight and Na H-Eileanan An Iar (formerly the Western Isles).

The Isle of Wight constituency, off the south coast of England, has existed unchanged since the Great Reform Act of 1832. As part of recent proposals by the coalition government to review constituency boundaries, the Boundary Commission proposed that the constituency be divided into two, with part joining up with the mainland (Boundary Commission, 2013). After a concerted effort by the current MP Andrew Turner supported by the 'One Wight' campaign (BBC, 2011), the proposals were adjusted to give the Isle of Wight two MPs and

no sharing with the mainland. These changes have now been postponed until 2018 at the earliest (BBC, 2013). Attempts have been made over the years to divide the Isle into two constituencies, particularly as it has often deviated significantly from the imposed population quotas. Indeed, after the 2010 boundary revisions, it was the only constituency in the UK with a deviation of above 15% from the quota (Rallings and Thrasher, 2007).

The constituency has historically changed hands between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. At the start of the period covered by this thesis, the Liberal MP Stephen Ross had been the incumbent since 1974, but going into the 1987 election he was defending a majority of just 4.65 percent, making the constituency ultra-marginal. The Conservatives gained the seat at the 1987 election, making it a fairly marginal constituency with a majority of 8.20 percentage points, before seeing the seat once more become an ultra-marginal seat at the 1992 election. The Liberal Democrats gained the seat once again at the 1997 election, but the constituency still remained marginal. The patterns in the latter three elections of the period are particularly interesting, however; the Conservatives gained the seat at the 2001 election with a 4.50 percentage point majority, making it an ultra-marginal seat. 2005 saw the Conservatives retain the seat, but with a massively increased majority of 19.42 percentage points. In a single election, the constituency had gone from an ultra-marginal to a very safe Conservative seat, and despite a slight fall to 14.98 at the 2010 election, the seat remains safe. So, in four of the six elections over the period under study, the Isle of Wight had been a marginal constituency changing hands between two parties, but in the latter two elections, the formerly marginal seat has become a safe seat.

While the Isle of Wight is the largest constituency in the UK under current constituency boundaries, the other selected constituency which has remained unchanged throughout the 1987 to 2010 period is the smallest (and also an island constituency). The Western Isles (renamed Na H-Eileanan An Iar in 2005) has existed in its present form since 1918 and has alternated between the Scottish National Party and Labour since 1935. Like the Isle of Wight, the constituency has also moved between being marginal and safe. Going into the 1987 election, the incumbent SNP MP Donald Stewart was defending a majority of 24.47 percentage points, making the Western Isles an ultra-safe constituency. However, Calum MacDonald gained the seat for Labour at the 1987 election and held it until the 2005 general election when Angus MacNeil won it for the SNP. The seat was fairly safe going into both the 1992 and 1997 elections, although in the latter, the majority was only .63 percentage points away from the cut-off point between marginal and safe seats. Calum MacDonald had

gained a 22.2 percentage point majority at the 1997 election, which meant that the constituency was once more ultra-safe; this did not last, with a rapid drop to become a fairly marginal seat (8.20) going into the 2005 election. The constituency once more became fairly safe after the 2005 and 2010 elections.

The origins of marginality

Although safe constituencies have consistently represented the vast majority of constituencies in the UK, the reason why constituencies have different degrees of marginality is not explained in detail by existing research. Constituencies are classified as marginal or safe according to their degree of vulnerability; i.e. how large their majority is going into an election campaign. As a constituency's marginality depends entirely on the percentage majority, it would be reasonable to trace the origins of marginality directly back to the voters themselves. Existing research also links voters and constituency marginality, with Curtice and Steed (1986:216) arguing that the reasons for an increase in safe constituencies were changes in the local population, specifically population migration from cities to rural areas, with Denver, Hands and MacAllister (2003) also drawing clear links between marginality and socio-demographics.

This section examines the first sub-hypothesis of this thesis that *constituency marginality originates in the local population*. As seen in chapter one, there are three schools of thought (sociological, socio-psychological and rational choice) that try to explain voter behaviour, evidence for all of which can be observed in the UK, although in this thesis sociological and rational choice theories of voting are favoured. By linking population composition with percentage majority, social group membership offers two potential explanations for marginality. The first nested hypothesis to be explored in this section is *safe constituencies have a higher proportion of traditional party support bases than marginal constituencies*. This question considers whether the presence of certain social groups in a constituency are more likely to make it safe or marginal for particular parties. Historically there have been links drawn between social groups and the likelihood of voting for certain parties, particularly in the case of class voting in the UK (Evans, 2000). It follows that if there is a significant proportion of a social group with ties to support for a specific party in a seat, it is more likely to be safe for that party.

The second nested hypothesis explored in this section is *safe constituencies have more stable populations than marginal constituencies*. By identifying key social groups associated with population stability, using the influence of theories of social integration by Putnam (1966), the likelihood that safe constituencies have more stable populations can be examined. If social groups (in the UK context, particularly class) matter when determining voter behaviour, then perhaps a high turnover of certain groups impacts the ability of a secure basis of party support to be maintained. After all, Curtice and Steed saw changes in constituency populations to be responsible for fluctuations in national patterns of marginality.

Social bases for the vote in safe constituencies

By linking levels of traditional social bases of parties support with marginality, sociological theories of voter behaviour are drawn upon. If social groups are so important in determining how people vote, and certain social groups are associated with support for particular parties, then it follows that if people in group x vote for party x, then constituencies with higher proportions of group x are likely to be safe for party x. Bealey, Blondel and McCann (1965) considered the influence of locally dominant (in numbers) classes on the minority class, discovering that in a constituency, the larger class group changes the behaviour of the smaller class group, with routine workers (a Labour support indicator) in a non- routine constituency (indicating Conservative support) adjusting their voting behaviour and being more likely to vote Conservative.

The question is how best to define social group membership in the UK, as it has been shown to be markedly different from the USA (Andersen and Heath, 2000). In Butler and Stokes' seminal work (1969) on UK voter behaviour, the authors examined the bases of Labour and Conservative party support. They found that social bases of voting had 'frozen' in the inter-war period, with working class voters typically voting Labour and middle class voters voting Conservative, with some interaction between party policy and sources of support (Clarke, Sanders, Stewart and Whiteley, 2004: 31). Class proved to be the primary social base for voting in the UK context, as Pulzer (1972:102). memorably states that 'class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail' Further research confirmed this view, with Kelley, MacAllister and Mughan (1985:720) concluding that 'the British system is the proto- typical example of class-based politics'.

There is some disagreement in regards to the continued importance of class as an explanation for voter behaviour. Since the 1960s, the class system has changed considerably with a decline in manufacture (and therefore routine workers) accompanying a rise in white-collar jobs and the growth of the middle class (Crewe, Särlvik and Alt, 1977). These changes have affected the ability of class to explain voter behaviour, with Butler and Stokes (1974:203) considering this trend to be 'one of the most important aspects of political change' in the 1970s. These changes in the class system have arguably affected the explanatory power of class on voter behaviour in the UK, impacting on the argument that safer constituencies are more likely to represent traditional (class) bases of party support.

There is some disagreement with the decline in importance of class in UK voter behaviour. While some authors (Evans, 2000) argue that class itself has been miss-specified and the true impact of class on contemporary political choice has been underestimated, others argue that the influence of class remains key. Kelley et al., (1985:721) suggest that to capture class sufficiently, a mixture of dimensions are important, not only drawing on traditional occupational indicators, but also other indicators such as education, and home-ownership. By restricting class to a single aspect of class like occupational classifications, studies are neglecting 'important aspects of class' (Kelley et al., 1985:721) leading to biased results. Such redefinitions have 'saved the relationship' (Clark and Lipset, 2001: 6; also see Clarke and Lipset 1993) between class and voter behaviour by extending the concept beyond the division between non-routine and routine labour (creating what Dunleavy, 1979: 412 refers to as 'core classes'), making it relevant to contemporary UK voter behaviour. Home ownership has been proven to have a strong link to class (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Garrahan, 1977), with middle class home owners tending to vote Conservative and working class council tenants tending to vote Labour. If the older occupation-driven definition of class is utilised, class still holds resonance in influencing voter behaviour, even though it may be less important than before. This is indicated by Crewe's (1986) figures on class dealignment which demonstrate that even amidst the decline of class voting between 1945 and 1983, it continued to explain around half of voter behaviour.

Following the example of Kelley et al. (1985), three variables have been identified to measure the relationship between social groups (operationalised as class) and safe constituencies. Two (the proportions of professionals and routine workers) are traditional class indicators, and if there is a link between bases of party support and marginality a higher proportion of routine workers in safe Labour constituencies and higher proportions of professionals in Conservative (and to a slightly lesser extent Liberal Democrat) safe

constituencies would be expected. Also drawing on the influence of Kelley et al. (1985) a third variable measuring the proportion of owner-occupiers in a constituency is also studied and higher proportions of owner-occupiers in Conservative and Liberal Democrat safe constituencies would be expected.

To test this, the datasets for each year were divided according to which party was incumbent going into each election. Bivariate correlations were run (see table 4.4) between the class indicators for each incumbency and percentage majority at the previous election (to measure marginality). By doing this it is possible to examine whether the indicators coincide with safer constituencies held by particular parties and whether these echo traditional support sources for those parties. From the results, the hypothesis on higher levels of traditional party support bases in safe constituencies is partly supported for Conservative constituencies. In regards to traditional occupation-derived measures of class, the variables for routine workers in the majority of the elections over the period appear to support the expected relationships.

The safer the Conservative constituency became, the lower the number of routine workers. These results suggest that at the majority of elections during the period, safe Conservative constituencies followed traditional social bases of the vote more closely than their marginal constituencies, having lower proportions of routine workers. When exploring the proportion of owner occupiers, in Conservative constituencies the correlation is significant for half of the elections under study and in the expected direction. This indicates that at the 1992, 1997 and 2010 election campaigns, safer Conservative constituencies were more likely to have higher proportions of owner occupiers than more marginal Conservative-held constituencies, which reflects what is already known about Conservative voters (Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson, 1994:49)

Table 4.4: Bivariate correlations between social class and previous majority according to seat incumbency

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative							
Owner Occupiers	.082**	.079	.135*	.271**	.042	-.059	.148*
Routine	-.152**	-.180**	-.074	-.453**	-.071	-.226**	-.253**
Labour							
Owner Occupiers	-.069**	-.040	.027	-.251**	-.251**	-.368**	-.303**
Routine	.283**	.038	.168*	.522**	.165*	.232**	.422**
Liberal Democrat							
Owner Occupiers	-.156*	-.235	.136	-.167	-.275	-.374**	-.082
Routine	.056	-0.57	-.204	-.066	-.143	-.033	.281*

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

These social bases of party support also appear to hold for the Labour Party. In a mirror-image of Conservative constituencies, the table shows that over the entire period safe Labour constituencies had higher proportions of routine workers than more marginal Labour constituencies, with significant results recorded in all elections except 1987. However, like the results for the Conservative, none of these correlations are particularly strong. Indeed, only the results for 1997 and 2010 are moderately correlated, with all others weakly correlated. The additional measure of owner-occupiers in the constituency also follows the expected direction in all elections except 1992. A negative relationship was expected as historically Labour supporters have low levels of home ownership (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992), although the relationship was significant only from 1997 onwards (and moderate in 2005 alone).

This delineation of class politics leaves little room for a middle party such as the Liberal Democrats especially when that party is 'relatively classless' (Whiteley, Seyd and Billingshurst, 2006:7). As Whiteley, Seyd and Billingshurst argue, the basis of Liberal Democrat support is not necessarily class, but rather geography, with concentrations of Liberal Democrat constituencies in both the South West of England in Scotland. There has been no constant class link in regards to policies as the party's policy positions have shifted

historically from right to left. While Liberal Democrat party members have high incomes and high levels of education (Whiteley et al., 2006: 36), there has always been a mismatch between people who chose to be members of parties and those who are not members but vote for the party (Seyd and Whiteley, 1992; Whiteley, Seyd, and Richardson, 1994). Using data from the British Election Study of 1997, 23% of Liberal Democrat voters are in routine occupations and the party is supported particularly by younger voters. Due to the classless nature of Liberal Democrat support, the correlations were not expected to reflect any particular trends. This proved to be the case, with only two significant results over the entire period.

Overall, safe constituencies *were* more likely to have higher levels of traditional social bases of the votes for each party than more marginal constituencies. Safer Conservative constituencies have lower levels of routine workers than in their marginal constituencies and the relationship is mirrored in safer Labour constituencies which tend to have higher levels of routine workers. These conclusions reflect the findings of Johnston, Pattie, Cutts and Fisher, (2012) who in their examination of party contacting in 2010 found that traditional social bases continued to matter in UK politics.

Population stability and constituency security

Once again drawing on the centrality of social groups in the sociological model of voter behaviour, this section examines whether population stability is key in explaining constituency marginality. A high level of change in the population, indicated by a high proportion of mobile social groups, may make a constituency more marginal because levels of party support are continually fluctuating beyond a natural variation in support. Safe constituencies are therefore more likely to have a stable population, whereas marginal constituencies are more likely to have a changeable population. To explore this, Putnam's research (1966) on social integration is used to identify social groups which can be examined for signs of population stability. His research argued that integration is key to stability. An individual who has created ties to the local area and is well integrated into the local community is more likely to remain in the area than someone who has not engaged with the area. Therefore, members of less well-integrated groups are more likely to comprise the non-permanent population. Putnam suggests operationalising social integration through various measures including directly examining the levels of migration in the area, as well as more

indirect ones. These include measuring the enrolment of children in local schools (parents are unlikely to seek to move from the local area once their child is attending school) and whether the respondent is a homeowner instead of a tenant (on the assumption that tenants can move relatively easily).

Taking influence from Putnam's operationalisation of social integration, three variables were selected to measure population stability: the proportion of owner occupiers, the proportion of under 18 year olds and the proportion of migrants. To initially examine whether safe constituencies are more likely to have stable populations, bivariate correlations were run to examine general trends across the period.

Table 4.5: Bivariate correlations between social integration and marginality

	1987-2010
Owner occupiers	-.080**
Under 18s	.010
Migrants	-.115**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results of the correlations for the social integration indicators display significant results for those two which are in the direction expected. The proportion of migrants (defined as those with a different address 12 months previously) in a constituency was correlated with percentage majority to examine the relationship between population stability and marginality directly. Putnam's research indicated that a high proportion of migrants would equal a less integrated (and by extension less stable) population, which would be expected to be associated with more marginal constituencies (i.e. as the percentage majority decreases). The results show a negative correlation of -.115 significant to $p<0.01$, which although very weak is in the expected direction; so safe constituencies have a lower proportion of migrants than marginal seats. Putnam's research also suggested that home owners were more integrated into the constituency as they had actively invested in it, making it more difficult to move; applying this to the present research would mean that safe constituencies were more likely to have higher proportions of owner occupiers. The data does not support this (-.080 significant at $p<0.01$), showing that the variable is weakly and *negatively* correlated with previous majority. This section hypothesised that higher levels of under 18s would indicate a more settled population, as it would identify school-age children (variables directly examining school attendance were absent) whose parents may be less likely to move due to their school

attendance. The results do appear to support this, albeit with only a marginally positive correlation of .010, this is not a significant correlation however.

Of these correlations, only two are in the expected direction and all are very weak. Considering why the relationship between population stability and marginality has not produced more conclusive results, it would appear that there are two main factors inhibiting the relationship. The first is the mismatch between theory and the actual UK context which presents significant complicating factors. As seen in the previous section, class plays a key role not only in determining voter behaviour, but also seems to be related to constituency marginality, with safe constituencies representing typical sources of party support. The traditional indicator for class is occupation, specifically the difference between non-routine and routine workers. However, in maintaining the relevance of class as a concept in contemporary UK voter behaviour the concept has been extended by authors such as (Kelley, MacAllister and Mughan, 1985) to consider additional variables including home-ownership. Butler and Stokes (1969) discovered links between those in non-routine jobs, home ownership and voting for the Conservatives.

This link between owner-occupiers and Conservative support in the UK presents a fundamental obstacle in applying Putnam's theories of social integration to understanding marginality. Consistently through the period, the very safest constituencies have been held by Labour – the very safest being Bootle at the 1997 general election which was held with a majority of 74.36. However, when analysing the typology of Labour support, Labour voters are more likely to be tenants as Dunleavy (1979) suggests, with Bootle's population of owner occupiers 18.5 percentage points lower than the average at the 1997 election. Therefore there is a mismatch between Putnam's theory of social integration and theories on party support; it is not possible to say that higher levels of home ownership cause constituencies to be safer.

To explore the explanatory power of socio-demographic variables in explaining marginality in the UK a linear regression was undertaken with marginality as the dependent variable, while the demographic variables examined in both the section on party support and population stability were added in stages. This was undertaken over the entire period from 1987 to 2010, with four variables in total entered; owner occupiers, routine workers, migrants and under 18s. As table 4.4 indicated, incumbency affects the relationship between socio-demographics and marginality. To counter this, binary control variables indicating which of the three parties are incumbent in the constituencies have also been entered, with the results are shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Regression examining the impact of socio-demographic variables on marginality

	1987-2010
Owner occupiers	-.200** (021)
Routine workers	.301** (.061)
Under 18s	-.390** (.057)
Migrants	-.602** (.071)
Conservative-held	2.873 (2.531)
Labour-held	6.027* (2.5256)
Liberal Democrat-held	-1.195 (2.715)
Adjusted r^2	.072

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

All demographic variables entered into the regression had a significant effect on variations in marginality. Migrants explained the highest proportion of such variation at 1.8 percentage points, followed by under 18s (1.7 percentage points), routine workers (.08 percentage points) and owner occupiers (.07 percentage points). Of the four variables, three are negative, which indicates that as the proportion of owners migrants and under 18s increased, marginality (i.e. previous majority) decreases – therefore safe constituencies have lower proportions of these groups than marginal seats. In contrast, safe seats have higher proportions of routine workers, echoing the link above between Labour (with their traditional support bases in such workers) and the safest seats. The control indicating Labour-held seats is also significantly related to marginality, with the direction indicating that Labour-held constituencies have significantly higher majorities than seats held by other parties. However, the explanatory power of the variables was low, explaining only five percentage points of marginality, with the incumbency controls adding another 2.2 percentage points. This is most likely due to the narrow focus of the regression on the origin of marginality in the constituency population; the regression has therefore discounted other factors including historical marginality as investigated by Cornford and Dorling (1997) as well as the majority from the previous election. Nevertheless, the regression indicates that five percent of marginality is explained by socio-demographic factors alone

Marginality and local electoral outcomes

Campaigning is an important intervening variable between marginality and local electoral outcomes. It is not only affected by constituency marginality, but also has an impact on local electoral outcomes. It is therefore important, before campaigning is introduced in the next chapter, to consider the theoretical origins and empirical evidence of the direct relationship between marginality and local electoral outcomes, operationalised in two dimensions as turnout and vote share.

The relationship between marginality and turnout has its roots in rational choice theories of voting behaviour. Based on the balance between costs and benefits, turnout will increase where the costs associated with voting are outweighed by the benefits it provides to citizens. Marginality is important when discussing the benefits of voting in the rational choice model; the closer the top two parties are (i.e. the more marginal the constituency) the greater the likelihood of casting the decisive vote, so higher levels of turnout should correspond with more marginal constituencies. There is empirical evidence, particularly from the USA, Canada and the UK, indicating that there is a relationship between marginality and turnout at the constituency level. Various American authors have presented persuasive evidence that the closer the election is, the higher the resulting turnout is across the US electoral system, including Congress (Caldera, Patterson and Markko, 1985) and the House of Representatives (Gillam Jr., 1985; Cox and Munger, 1989). In the UK context, Denver and Hands (1974, 1985) examined in detail the relationship between marginality and turnout in the UK during the 1970s, clearly linking the two variables as far back as their studies would allow (1966). Several studies have built on these fluctuations, with many recording a weaker relationship between marginality and turnout in the early 1990s (Denver, 1995; Pattie and Johnston, 1998a; 1998b), although by the late 1990s the relationship was once again strong.

The link between the two variables between 1987 and 2010 was established for this thesis by carrying out bivariate correlations between marginality and turnout. A negative relationship is expected, with turnout declining as the percentage majority rises. The results of these correlations show a significant relationship ($p<.001$) in the expected direction, although at -.325 it is fairly modest, which is consistent with the comparative weakness already observed by literature in both 1987 and 1992. To explore whether this may be the case, I ran correlations for the individual election years (the results are shown in table 4.7), with the

results for all years being significant to .001 and in the expected direction, with constituencies with higher turnout having lower previous majorities.

Table 4.7: Bivariate correlations between marginality and turnout

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	-.325**	-.121**	-.113**	-.253**	-.679**	-.694**	-.480**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

There is a considerable degree of variation in the strength of the relationship over the elections, with the results for 1987 and 1992 being particularly weak, corresponding to Denver and Hands' findings. In the latter four elections of the period, the correlations between marginality and turnout strengthen, being particularly strong in 2001 and 2005 (-.679 and -.694 respectively).

To examine this in more detail, ANOVA tests were conducted in the combined dataset to explore if turnout varied significantly across the five categories of constituency marginality. Drawing on rational choice theories, the lowest turnouts should correspond to ultra-safe constituencies where the costs of voting are high and the benefits received minimal. The results of the ANOVA in table 4.8 do indeed show a significant difference in turnout between the five categories of marginality, with a clear drop in turnout in ultra-safe constituencies.

Table 4.8: ANOVA results comparing turnout across five categories of marginality

	Mean	SD	n	F
Ultra-Marginal	71.38 (.32)	6.64	435	42.572**
Fairly Marginal	69.78 (.33)	7.10	464	
Fairly Safe	69.56 (.32)	7.24	495	
Very Safe	69.75 (.32)	7.39	520	
Ultra-safe	66.49 (.24)	10.27	1890	

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Whereas the middle three categories (very marginal, fairly safe and very safe) have almost identical turnout figures across the period, all within a small range of 0.22 percentage points of each other, there are clear differences in the two extreme categories (ultra-marginal and ultra-safe). Ultra-marginal constituencies see a significant increase in mean turnout of 1.6 percentage points over the next closest category, whereas ultra-safe constituencies have turnouts on average 3.26 percentage points lower than the next safest category. Interestingly, the highest standard deviation figures are for the ultra-safe category at 10.27, with ultra-marginal constituencies having the smallest deviations. On average ultra-safe constituencies have significantly lower turnouts than other categories of marginality, although there is a great deal of variation within the category.

The indications from this analysis are that the two variables are indeed correlated. Turnout declines the safer a constituency is as the benefits associated with voting are reduced. In this thesis, however, campaigning is the key intervening variable, which is in itself often closely related to marginality. This is because the relationships between marginality and both campaigning and turnout are not perfect; there are elements of both campaigning and turnout that are not captured by marginality. Denver and Hands (1974) explain the relationship between marginality and turnout as being evidence of the 'parties' efforts to stimulate turnout in more marginal seats' (Denver and Hands, 1974:35) once again linking campaigning closely with marginality.

The relationship between marginality and vote share is a little less obvious, although still key. Constituency marginality, as explored above, is measured according to the majority held by the party in first place over the party in second place at an election; the closer these two parties are, the more marginal the seat at a subsequent election. Therefore marginality is very closely related in a causal relationship to vote share; vote share creates constituency marginality while the latter also measures the level of support the winning party has in a constituency.

Conclusion

Marginality partially originates in the local population, with the most persuasive explanation being that it originates from the party support bases in a constituency. Class remains one of the defining concepts in British politics, and variables centred on the traditional occupational classifications were significantly related to Conservative and Labour vote share, although they were relatively weak. As constituency marginality increases (i.e. the seat became safer) Conservative-held constituencies often have far higher levels of home-ownership, whereas Labour-held constituencies had significantly higher levels of routine workers. Applying Putnam's (1996) theory of population stability to marginality in the UK proved more problematic, with indicators of stability being closely linked to those of party support bases and often working in the opposite direction to what was expected.

Marginality is the underpinning variable of this thesis, as it enables the identification of and distinctions between safe and marginal constituencies to be made. Safe constituencies are not well understood by researchers, despite representing over two-thirds of all seats in the UK. Yet researchers pay safe constituencies comparatively little attention, focusing on the ramifications of constituency campaigning in a minority of constituencies. Instead, this thesis focuses on how campaigning affects local electoral outcomes in safe constituencies.

Although safe constituencies are considered to be less vulnerable to seat turnover than marginal seats, it is not unheard of for even ultra-safe constituencies to change hands, with an average of sixteen changing hands at each election between 1987 and 2010. Marginality can be fluid: some constituencies (particularly island ones) have remained unaltered throughout the period, offering an opportunity to examine fluctuations in constituency marginality. In both the cases (the Isle of Wight and the Western Isles) the constituencies fluctuated not only between different party incumbencies, but also different degrees of marginality. Marginality should not be treated as a static concept; safe constituencies should interest parties and researchers because there is quite simply no guarantee that they will remain safe. The next chapter takes the concept of marginality and considers what impact it has on levels of campaigning. Research already referred to indicates that there is a growing trend towards disproportionate campaigning in marginal constituencies, and the next chapter identifies *which constituencies* are being neglected (whether it is all safe constituencies or only the safest) and *by whom* (depending upon the party, and more importantly the incumbency status of the candidate).

Chapter 5
Marginality and Campaigning

Campaigning acts as a source of information for voters, not only reducing the costs of obtaining such information, but also providing detail on party policy positions, all of which feeds into the cost/benefit calculation associated with rational choice theories of voting. However, campaigning can vary in intensity, and evidence from existing literature indicates that marginality is an important influence on campaign levels (Evans, Curtice and Norris, 1998), thereby affecting the information given to voters, particularly in safe constituencies. This chapter addresses the second sub-hypothesis of the thesis, by examining whether *constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency*, with safer constituencies seeing less campaigning, as well as its associated nested hypotheses which will be indicated throughout**.** As part of this examination, patterns in both campaign spending and campaign activity are examined where possible over the period of analysis.

Drawing on existing literature, potential explanations for variation in campaigning are explored to create a model through which the relationship between marginality and levels of campaigning can be tested. The relationship is firstly explored using aggregate figures for the campaign variables at the constituency level to examine overall trends. These aggregate data enable us to look at the general relationship between marginality and campaigning before refining it to look at the variations introduced by disaggregating according to party and incumbencies. The chapter ends by proposing a new way of measuring relative levels of campaigning through the creation of a variable identifying low level campaigning to examine whether such campaigns are indeed associated with safe constituencies.

Defining campaigning

Election campaigns are a defined period of time during which political parties offer voters information, with the aim of gaining power and thereby having the ability to put their policies into action. Information is provided in a range of ways by campaigns; from televised party political broadcasts to leaflets (Rosenbaum, 1997). Campaigns are important because the information that they provide can affect voter behaviour; mobilising people to vote and

also affecting the way in which they vote. Campaigning is important for rational voters because it provides information which lowers the costs of voting. By explaining candidates' positions on policy the voter can choose which party would offer the best benefits. For sociological voters, the information provided by campaigns encourages voter turnout by reaffirming the vote choices of the social groups they belong to. While the phrase campaigning can refer to different types and levels of elections, this thesis specifically examines campaigning at the constituency level in the UK for three reasons; the ability to focus on a specific area, the research design and the origins of the hypotheses.

The thesis hypothesis examines whether low level campaigns have a detrimental effect on local electoral outcomes in safe constituencies. To make this argument, there needs to be a certain level of comparison between the studies from which I am drawing my influence, and all of the existing studies examine constituency campaigning; it makes sense, therefore, to also examine campaigning at this level. It also offers a defined geographical area within which not only to observe campaigning but also to examine campaign influence. This thesis also adopts a quantitative methodological approach, and studying the campaign at the constituency level provides a spread of data which make a quantitative approach possible. The constituency is also the fundamental unit of analysis, so it makes sense to examine data at this level.

As set out in chapter three, there are discernible groups of researchers using three different ways to measure campaigning; those using expenditure data, those using party agent survey data and those using party member survey data. However, the divisions between the groups of researchers have become increasingly blurred, and it is now considerably more common to combine different measures in a single study. This chapter draws on two data sources: spending data and party agent survey data.

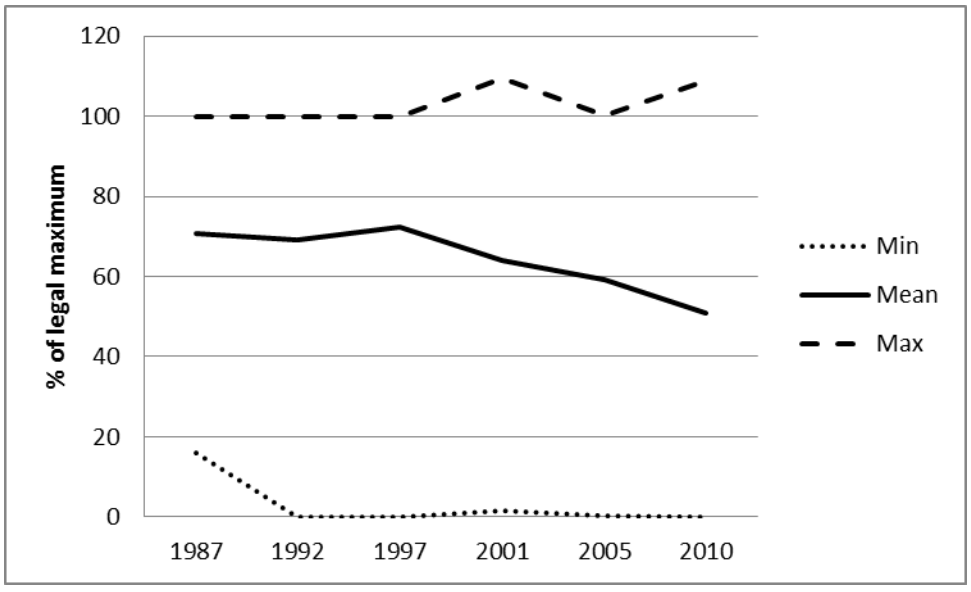
Campaigning 1987-2010

Despite the core aims of voter conversion and mobilisation remaining constant, campaigning has changed considerably between 1987 and 2010, not only in terms of the available technology, but also in the increasingly strategic nature of campaigning concentration. The 1997 general election saw Labour conduct a technologically adept and effective campaign (Kavanagh 1997:540), demonstrating the potential of exploiting new technology not only to

contact voters, but to present an effective front to other parties. Technology has developed rapidly over this period, with the growth in internet usage and from pagers to mobile phones, to smart phones and social media, and parties have adapted alongside, using these new media to contact voters. Campaigning strategies have also altered over the course of the period, with political parties increasingly focusing their attention on marginal constituencies; the landslide Labour victory in 1997 once again proving to be the turning point.

Graph 5.1 shows average spending data in constituencies at elections between 1987 and 2010. The maximum average spend by the three parties in constituencies has remained fairly constant, despite some candidates exceeding the legal maximum permitted in both 1992 and 1997; otherwise the maximums have remained very close to the highest possible figure. This has been accompanied by a particularly steep decrease in the minimum spent by parties over the period. Whereas in the first two elections of the period, the average minimum spend was between 23 and 24 percent of the legal maximum, there was a significant decline in 1997 to 17.44; in the latter three elections, the drop in minimum spend was even greater, falling to a low of 3.02 percentage points in 2005. That these figures have declined considerably over the period of study, accompanied by a fairly constant level of maximum spending indicates that some constituencies are experiencing a much lower level of campaign spending than others.

Graph 5.1: Trends in average campaign spending



Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

This, along with the increasingly strategic approach by parties to campaigning is reflected particularly by variations in the standard deviations for aggregate expenditure over the period. While the figures fluctuate, there is an overall rise (from 16.14 percentage points in 1987 to 17.96 percentage points in 2010) indicating some support for the increased targeting of constituencies. The larger standard deviations signify that there is greater variation in the amount of money spent, which means that while some constituencies are seeing high spending, others are seeing much lower levels. The likely explanation, based on existing literature, is that parties have become increasingly strategic in their spending, focusing on marginal seats.

Examining the aggregate figures for the two campaign activity variables used in this thesis (the proportion of the constituency canvassed via doorstep and telephone) presents several problems; namely the number of cases available through which patterns may be investigated. These variables originate from Denver and Hands' studies of party agents, and while overall response rates were good (Fisher, Denver and Hands, 2006a), the responses were infrequently from the same constituency. Rather than calculate average figures for constituencies where data on doorstep and telephone canvassing were missing for one or more parties (underestimating the level of campaigning), average figures were only calculated for constituencies in which all three parties had responded. This resulted in 454 and 179 cases for average doorstep and telephone canvassing respectively over the period (full descriptive results for both variables can be found in Appendix 1).

The maximum level of doorstep canvassing reported by parties ranged from 66.33 percentage points in 1992 to 60 percentage points in 1997. The maximum figures are fairly constant, which reflects the findings of the expenditure figures. Like the spending figures, the average minimum percentage of the constituency drops over the period, from 1.67 percentage points in 1992 to nothing at all in the subsequent two elections. This means that while the maximum percentage of the constituency being canvassed on the doorstep was remaining fairly constant at over 60 percentage points, there were constituencies in 1997 and 2001 where none of the three main parties canvassed on the doorstep. However, there was a steady decline in standard deviations for doorstep canvassing; this indicates that there was increasingly less variation in rates of doorstep canvassing. Such a decrease could be attributed to various factors, but as it is also accompanied by a fall in the mean implies an overall fall in popularity. Caution should be used with these results, however, due to the calculation of the average. It is possible that there may be common features amongst such

constituencies which skew the results. Later in this chapter, campaigning will be explored on a party-by-party basis which may reveal more regarding these data.

It is difficult to read too much into the patterns in telephone canvassing over the period, as data are only available for two years; 1997 and 2001, particularly as the same problems regarding responses as seen in the doorstep canvassing figures apply. Over the two years, the mean aggregate score for the proportion of a constituency canvassed by the three parties fell by over seven percentage points to 7.44 percent in 2001. However, in some constituencies, it was continuing to be used highly, with an increase in the maximum score by two percentage points between 1997 and 2001. If an increase were to be seen in targeted telephone canvassing, an increase in the standard deviations for the aggregate scores between the two elections would be expected, as this would indicate more variation in the data. What is actually seen in the telephone canvassing data is a decline between the two elections. These figures should be interpreted with a note of caution, however. For telephone canvassing, there are only data for two election years, which only gives a snapshot of the variable. Also, because of the stringent way in which the aggregate data have been calculated, by excluding constituencies that do not have data for all three parties, the number of cases is reduced. This then introduces an element of considering the types of constituencies that had responses for telephone canvassing from all parties between the two elections.

Variations in levels of campaigning

To produce a model to effectively test whether low level campaigns are most often run in safe constituencies, other potential variables which might affect the level of campaigning must be incorporated. Such controls ensure that the maximum amount of variation in levels of campaigning can be accounted for by marginality alone. Hints on potential control variables can be found in existing literature to identify three key groups other than marginality which may also account for variations in the level of campaigning: tenure, party members and socio-demographics.

Tenure and campaigning

Whereas constituency visits by British MPs were something of a rarity in the UK in the 1950s, (with some incumbents visiting only annually and normally living outside the constituency), during the 1960s, increasing importance was placed on the incumbent having links to the constituency. The closer links between a constituency and its MP facilitated personal votes by building recognition of the incumbent, their policies and standpoints on key local issues; isolating these personal votes for established MPs, they could amount to approximately 1500 votes (Curtice and Steed, 1980). Closely linked to this is the life-cycle of incumbency (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1983:90), during which a newly elected MP defends their constituency by establishing a personal vote through intense campaigning. These personal votes gained will then act (theoretically) as a cushion at future elections once the incumbent's interests has been turned away from their constituency to national politics (Wood and Norton, 1992:228), negating the need for continued intense campaigning.

To examine this, bivariate correlations were run between aggregate data on campaigning and three measures of length of tenure; there is also likely to be an association with marginality, with longer tenures being more probable in safe seats. As explored in chapter three, length of tenure has been measured in three ways using information from *Dods* and *The Times Guide to the House of Commons*: seat tenure, career tenure and first-term incumbents. The first two are continuous measures which measure, respectively, the period of time in which an incumbent has served in the most recent permutation of constituency boundaries and the total period of time in which they have served as incumbents. Seat tenure follows more closely on from the measure used by Wood and Norton, which only measured tenure accumulated in 'the most recent locality' (1992:231). As Norton and Wood argue (1990: 201), constituency boundary changes have made the process of tracing length of tenure difficult, but by creating continuous measures for both seat and career tenure these are able to be accounted for. If their conclusions are to be reflected here, a negative relationship would be expected – that is the longer the tenure of the incumbent, the more campaigning declines.

Table 5.1: Bivariate correlations between tenure and campaigning variables

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Seat						
Spend	.015	-.036	-.019	-.125**	-.090**	-.014
Doorstep		-.010	-.021	-.015		
Telephone			.050	-.060		
Career						
Spend	-.103**	-.055	-.071*	-.227**	-.179**	-.128**
Doorstep		-.052	.088*	-.047		
Telephone			-.044	-.159**		

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Table 5.1 shows the results of the bivariate correlations between the two continuous measures of tenure: seat incumbency and career incumbency. Looking firstly at how these measures are associated with aggregate campaign spending, there appears to be some support for the expected association. For both continuous tenure measures, the correlations with aggregate spending are almost all negative as expected. However, the significance varies substantially: while seat incumbency and spending have significant correlations in 2001 and 2005 only, for career incumbency there are significant (but weak) results for all election years except 1992. These results are echoed by the correlations for aggregate doorstep canvassing with negative correlations for all except the career incumbency measure in 1997, which is not only positive, but also the only significant value for doorstep canvassing. Correlating telephone canvassing with the two measures offers similar results, with both values for the career measure being negative as expected, although only the value for 2001 is significant.

The third measure of tenure is a binary variable identifying whether the incumbent is defending their constituency for the first time. A simple binary classification was created, enabling fast identification of which constituencies were being defended by first-term MPs at each election. Such MPs are most likely to run intense campaigns to build up their personal vote; this level of campaigning is not sustained at later elections, with the incumbent relying on their personal vote. The binary variable identifying first-term MPs was entered into an independent samples t-test alongside the three campaigning variables to examine whether there were significant differences between the mean levels of campaigning carried out by

first-term MPs compared to other candidates. If Wood and Norton's results were to be reflected here, significantly higher campaigning in constituencies being defended by first-term MPs would be expected. This would not only be due to the building of a personal vote to rely on later in their career as they build their national political profile, but also by opposing parties seeking to exploit an incumbent candidate who had not yet built up such a vote. To support this, the bivariate correlations should show a negative correlation between campaigning and length of tenure.

At each election during the period under study, there *were* significant differences in the amount of money spent between constituencies with first-term incumbents and those in which the incumbent was not a first-termer. For all years, spending and doorstep canvassing were significantly higher in constituencies where the incumbent was a first-term MP. In 1992, where a first-term MP was incumbent, doorstep canvassing was 13.61 percentage points higher than in other constituencies. The picture from telephone canvassing is a little more mixed, with significant results, but in opposing directions. In 1997, constituencies with first-term MPs canvassed on average 0.18 percentage points less than other seats, whereas in 2001, the difference was 4.73 percentage points. This may be due to telephone canvassing not being used optimally in 1997 as a new method of campaigning, leading to first-term MPs canvassing less.

There are three conclusions to be taken from these results: evidence for the association, the merits of the measures and the effect of party. There does indeed appear to be an association between tenure length and levels of campaigning, supporting Wood and Norton's conclusions. The correlations for the continuous variables are mostly in the expected direction, with longer tenures (whether seat or career) more likely to be associated with lower levels of campaigning. This supports the idea of an intense initial campaign by first-termers to defend their seat, falling away over time as the incumbent's interest turns towards national politics. This pattern is reflected when examining first-term MPs, with these incumbents being associated with significantly higher average campaigning figures than non first-term MPs. Secondly, of the two continuous variables, career tenure seems to be the better measure, which is likely to be attributable to boundary changes over the period; boundaries change, but these changes are often relatively slight. I believe that by using seat tenure, the measure underestimates the personal vote that a candidate may have built up in a preceding tributary constituency, despite Wood and Norton placing importance on experience in the immediate locality. Finally, the campaign variables used above are aggregate, not party specific. Once campaigning is disaggregated according to parties later in

this chapter, some variation may be found which indicates party tactics and priorities which have been obscured by or underestimated by these aggregate results.

It is not only campaigning that tenure may be related to; it is likely that there is also an interaction with previous majority, with incumbents who have served multiple terms more likely to be in safe constituencies. Such constituencies are less likely to change hands, as shown in the previous chapter, so it is easier for an incumbent to build up longer career tenures than in marginal constituencies where the likelihood of the seat changing hands is greater. Bivariate correlations between the two variables at each election (as shown in table 5.2) indicate some support for interactions between marginality and career tenure.

Table 5.2: Bivariate correlations between career tenure and previous majority

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.237**	.110**	.194**	.181**	.158**	.207**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

At each election, not only are all the correlations positive, they are all significant, indicating that higher majorities are significantly correlated with longer serving MPs. These initial results indicate that when constructing the multivariate model to examine the relationship between levels of campaigning and marginality, it would be a prudent option to incorporate an interaction term between marginality and tenure.

Party members and campaigning

Over the past fifty years (Webb, 1995; Fisher, 2000) there has been a steep decline in party membership in the UK; not least during the period covered by this thesis, with the Conservatives in particular suffering a sharp drop in membership during the 1990s (Fisher, Denver and Hands 2006b). In addition to the two canvassing measures used throughout this thesis, the party agent surveys conducted by Denver and Hands (1992-2001) offer estimates of local party memberships which have validated by comparisons to other data (see Fisher et al., 2006b for a comparison with the Committee on Standards in Public Life; also Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2008:381) with party agents able to give an accurate assessment of the local party capacity. These figures enable the 'significant association' (Fisher et al., 2006b:509)

between party membership and levels of campaigning to be explored. More members may mean more resources to call on during election campaigns for campaign activities and organisation. This is reflected in existing literature on party members which demonstrates that there is 'recognition of the importance of party members' (Whiteley and Seyd, 1994:6) during election campaigns. It is possible that higher numbers of party members enable higher levels of campaigning to take place as there is more capacity to do so, although this may vary according to the type of campaigning being examined. Spending figures have been shown to comprise mostly printing costs of leaflets and other campaign literature (Johnston, 1979); constituencies where there are high numbers of leaflets being printed (i.e. where spending is high) may be associated with higher levels of party members as there are more members to facilitate their distribution. The link between levels of doorstep canvassing and party membership levels is clear – the greater the number of party members, the greater the capacity for the parties to cover larger proportions of constituencies by doorstep canvassing. The link between telephone canvassing and party membership is less clear, with many parties relying on national or regional phone banks 'staffed by paid workers to canvass voters in particular constituencies' (Denver, Hands and MacAllister, 2004:304), therefore not directly linking party membership in specific geographical areas with telephone canvassing.

If these ideas are to be supported, when comparing aggregate party membership with levels of the three campaign variables a positive correlation should be seen; higher levels of campaigning coinciding with higher numbers of party members. To explore the data, bivariate correlations were run between candidate expenditure, doorstep canvassing, telephone canvassing and the number of party members in the constituency for the available years, with the results shown in table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Bivariate correlations between number of party members and campaigning variables

	1992	**1997**	**2001**
Spend	.132	.452**	.355**
Doorstep	-.253	.370**	.348**
Telephone		.072	.034

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results for bivariate correlations between the overall number of party members and the three campaign variables are mixed. For spending, while the correlations are positive in all years, they are only significant in 1997 and 2001, peaking in 1997 and remain fairly modest. Surprisingly the correlation for doorstep canvassing is actually negative in 1992, although not significant, but is in the expected direction and significant in the latter two years. There are very weak and insignificant correlations for telephone canvassing in both years, which were expected. It is not necessarily conducted by the local party members themselves and can often be conducted entirely from national telephone banks or, in the case of Whiteley and Seyd (2002), firstly conducted by local telephone banks with follow-up canvassing conducted by national telephone banks. It should be remembered, however, that these correlations have been conducted on aggregate data – as will be see later it may be that individual parties have stronger correlations.

This relationship between levels of party membership and campaigning is 'far from perfect' (Fisher et al., 2006b: 509); a great deal depends not only on the willingness of party members to help with the local campaign, but also the local context. It is important to note that being a party member does not guarantee that an individual helps with the local campaign. Party members can be active (by helping out during campaigns), inactive (largely paper members) or even 'sporadic interventionists' (Dowse and Hughes, 1977) who may assist in campaigning, but not on a regular basis. What the results of the data may be revealing are the concerted efforts of a minority of members. Therefore, to equate large numbers of members with higher levels of campaigning is too simplistic.

Marginality also complicates the relationship between party membership levels and campaigning, with safe constituencies likely to have higher membership numbers for the incumbent party, which refers back to Seyd and Whiteley's earlier observations on success incentivising membership. Marginal constituencies may have relatively small membership numbers compared to safe constituencies, but in these constituencies campaigning is at a high level. The incumbency history of the constituency is likely to impact on party membership, with losing parties likely to see a 'spiral of demobilisation' (Whiteley and Seyd 1998:135) accompanied by a decrease in members as the incentives to participate drop. The evidence regarding the relationship between party membership and campaign activity, although initially seeming positive, is actually a complex one incorporating misleading sources of campaign activity and a declining membership. However, the correlations are moderate and the relationship is a believable one; more members mean a greater ability to canvass in the constituency.

Marginality and campaign intensity

The relationship between marginality and campaigning has its roots in rational choice theories of party behaviour; particularly those on vote-seeking parties. Under Downs' original model, parties are 'not only vote seekers but vote maximisers' (Strom 1990:566). This has implicitly influenced studies of constituency campaigning in the UK, with clear distinctions drawn between rational and irrational campaign expenditure (Johnston et al., 2013:116). It is rationality which underpins the relationship between marginality and campaign intensity, based on the nature of marginality itself. The concept is one of constituency vulnerability to changing hands, with marginal constituencies more likely than safe constituencies to do so at election time. It is rational for parties to concentrate their resources on those constituencies which are more likely to change hands and where parties have the most to gain or lose; there is a greater return for mobilising and converting voters.

Denver, Hands and MacAllister (2003:136) discovered evidence from as far back as the 1950s for the relationship between marginality and campaigning, with marginal constituencies receiving higher levels of campaigning. More evidence was found for the relationship in the 1970s, with Denver and Hands (1985:382) discovering that 'parties were becoming more sophisticated…increasingly concentrating their local campaign efforts upon critical seats'. The Liberal Party revived the importance of local activism in election campaigns (Rennard, 2011), with Denver and Hands finding that 'only the much smaller Liberal Party focuses its efforts, which apparently pay off to some extent, on advertising in the marginal constituencies' (1997b:119). During the early part of the period under investigation in this thesis, Labour and the Liberal Democrats adopted a rational campaigning pattern, focusing their resources on the most marginal constituencies (for a discussion see Pattie and Johnston, 2003b). However, the Conservatives tended to use a substantial amount of resources in seats they were expected to win, with the party 'struggl[ing] to rationally organise their campaigning' (Fisher, Cutts and Fieldhouse, 2011: 820).

This relationship has intensified over the period covered by the present study, particularly since the success of strategic targeting by Labour at the 1997 general election. The party mounted a targeted electoral strategy utilising all available technology, known as Operation

Victory. This intense strategy was extremely effective for Labour, playing a key role in their landslide victory and increasing the adoption of targeting in subsequent elections by other parties. By 2001, Labour were defending a large majority, so a largely defensive campaign in which 'every priority seat had the services of a special organiser' (Fisher Denver and Hands, 2006a: 573) was adopted in the face of the rational resource targeting strategy operated by the Conservatives. The preparations that are undertaken even before official election campaigns (Denver, 2010:598) also indicate that the relationship between campaign intensity and marginality remains strong. Prior to the 2010 general election, a long-term donor to the Conservative Party, Lord Ashcroft, had donated large sums which were being used to kick-start a pre-election targeting campaign of marginal constituencies (Newman, 2010). In the six months prior to the election, voters in the constituencies receiving Ashcroft funding were 'twice as likely to be contacted as those living elsewhere' (Johnston, Pattie, Cutts and Fisher, 2012:320). It was not only the Conservatives who were instigating pre-election targeting of marginal constituencies; Gordon Brown took over from Tony Blair as Prime Minister in 2007 and was swiftly confronted by attempted terror attacks, receiving a poll boost for his decisive action. There was widespread speculation that he would call a snap election, as the polls indicated that he would win easily, and preparations got underway with Saatchi and Saatchi designing the 'Not Flash, Just Gordon' (BBC, 2007) slogan, and the identification of target marginal seats. During the 2010 election campaign, with the Conservatives running an expansionist campaign and Labour running a defensive one, 'marginality still mattered and marginal constituencies received the most attention' (Johnston et al., 2012:318); Labour concentrated particularly on very marginal constituencies (those with a previous majority of between 5 and 9.99%). Indeed in ultra-safe constituencies not held by Labour, only 25% of voters reported any contact from Labour at all.

It also appears from Labour's preparations for the 2015 election that the relationship between marginality and campaign intensity remains strong. In early 2013, Labour publicised their list of target constituencies, more than two years before the 2015 election. Such advance preparation is 'typical of recent British general elections' (Johnston et al., 2012: 317) and it is this planning of the strategic allocation of resources which demonstrates the continued importance of marginality in modern UK elections. Such strategic campaigning also occurs in modern American election campaigns, as described by Cann and Cole (2011) who give the example of John Kerry expected to win all the New England states except New Hampshire and where 'campaign appearances and advertisements will not change these

outcomes…it is not in the best interest of either candidate to campaign there' (Cann and Cole, 2011:346).

There is evidence from existing literature of the relationship between marginality and campaigning, particularly increased targeting of marginal constituencies, over the period. To gain a sense of this relationship from the data, bivariate correlations were conducted between the two variables in the combined dataset, and the relationship was indeed negative at -.424 (significant to p<.001). ANOVA tests were also conducted over the period between the five categories of marginality (as the independent variable) and each campaigning variable (as the dependent) to examine whether the marginality category of a constituency significantly affected the level of campaigning there. The expected relationship would be that as constituencies become safer, campaigning declines significantly, with the largest differences likely to be observed in the ultra-safe constituencies.

Table 5.4: ANOVA results comparing campaigning levels across five categories of marginality (post-hoc testing in Appendix 2)

	Mean	SD	n	F
Spending				
Ultra-Marginal	69.80	13.98	435	175.547**
Fairly Marginal	68.06	14.11	464	
Fairly Safe	64.65	16.37	495	
Very Safe	60.96	15.68	519	
Ultra-safe	52.32	17.78	1889	
Doorstep canvassing				
Ultra-Marginal	26.63	14.82	55	3.040*
Fairly Marginal	23.89	13.98	67	
Fairly Safe	23.39	12.85	51	
Very Safe	23.79	13.34	74	
Ultra-safe	20.06	14.75	207	
Telephone canvassing				
Ultra-Marginal	13.43	11.08	20	9.331**
Fairly Marginal	12.92	9.19	25	
Fairly Safe	11.82	8.95	20	
Very Safe	6.85	9.04	28	
Ultra-safe	4.89	5.84	86	

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Spending n = 3804, doorstep n = 454, telephone n = 179. Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The ANOVA results for all three campaigning variables shown in table 5.4 have significant differences, but greater detail can be found in the associated descriptive statistics and Tukey post-hoc testing (appendix 2), which indicates precisely which groups differ significantly from each other. For all three campaigning types the expected relationship can be observed; as constituencies become safer, the level of campaigning falls. There is a noticeably larger

fall in campaign expenditure for ultra-safe constituencies than for the other categories, with the mean figure of 53.90 percent of the legal maximum being 7.62 percentage points lower than the very safe category. The post-hoc testing also reveals that in ultra-safe constituencies spending was significantly lower than all other categories of marginality over the period. The results for doorstep canvassing are also significant, with the descriptive statistics demonstrating that as constituencies became safer, there was a decrease in the level of such canvassing, although the means for the middle three categories are all within 0.10 percentage points of each other. The only significant differences in the post-hoc testing are between ultra-marginal and ultra-safe constituencies. The results for telephone canvassing reflect the same trends, with an increase in previous majority leading to a gradual decline in mean telephone canvassing, from 13.43 percent coverage in ultra-marginal seats, to just 4.89 percent in ultra-safe constituencies. The post-hoc tests also show ultra-safe and all other categories (except very safe seats) of constituencies saw a significant difference in mean telephone canvassing. These results offer support for the relationship between marginality and campaigning for all three campaigning variables, with ultra-safe constituencies seeing significantly lower levels of campaigning than ultra-marginal seats.

This initial testing has indicated that lower levels of campaigning are associated with higher percentage majorities. However, in order to answer the chapter hypothesis that *constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency, with safer constituencies seeing less campaigning*, a multivariate model is required. The model created for this chapter has been constructed with marginality (operationalised as previous majority) as the independent variable, and aggregate campaigning variables (spend, doorstep canvass and telephone canvass) as the dependent variables. A mixture of six political and social control variables were selected from the literature to produce the most effective explanatory model, with alternate models trialled by adding the control variables in blocks.

The first control variable is the length of the incumbent's career tenure, with the correlations conducted earlier in the chapter indicating that campaigning declines the longer an incumbent's tenure. Three measures of tenure (seat, career and first-termers) were produced, and of the three, the continuous variable measuring the length of the incumbent's career was most effective. It also performed best of the three variables when trialling alternative models for this section. There were significant bivariate correlations between marginality and career tenure, with safer constituencies being associated with longer tenures. To control for this interaction, a variable measuring it was created by multiplying marginality and career tenure

together and entering it into the model. To ensure consistency and eliminate bias, tenure was also retained in the models alongside marginality and the interaction.

A variable measuring the aggregate number of party members in a constituency was also entered into the trials on the basis of the initial examinations above which linked higher levels of canvassing with higher numbers of party members. Interestingly, this variable offered no explanatory boost to the model when controlling for the other variables, even when the dependent variable was doorstep canvassing which 'required large numbers of committed party workers in each constituency' (Pattie and Johnston, 2003a:304). It was therefore excluded from the final model.

The final control variables are those accounting for various measures of constituency socio-demographics. The association between socio-demographics and campaigning is important, but complicated. Although the variables examined in the last chapter were found to have an impact on marginality, they are also likely to impact the level of campaigning so were also considered alongside a range of additional demographic variables. The analysis began with sixteen socio-demographic variables, including those explored in the previous chapter. These were correlated together across the period, and those with correlations of greater than .600 were removed, leaving seven socio-demographic variables to explore in relation to aggregate levels of the three measures of campaigning. Higher levels of spending were associated with constituencies with higher proportions of migrants, whereas lower spends were associated with higher proportions of owner occupiers, students, retired and routine workers. It is interesting to note that looking particularly at the class nature of some of these variables; it would appear that more affluent constituencies (Conservatives) are more likely to have higher levels of spending. This is perhaps unsurprising, in that the Conservatives not only have the greatest resources, but generally spend more overall. The correlations were all weak, which is probably due to the multiple elections covered and as such are likely to mask fluctuations, particularly when there has been a change of government.

Different combinations of the remaining variables (the proportions of owner occupiers, retired people, routine workers and migrants) were tested to see which offered the best results, and the model which included all four was found to offer the best explanatory power. To support the relationship between marginality and campaigning, marginality should be significantly and negatively related to campaigning; the higher the percentage majority (i.e. the safer the constituency) the lower the level of campaigning. In addition to a regression examining the overall relationship between marginality and campaigning between 1987 and

2010, individual regressions were conducted for each election year. This was due to the likely variation in the relationship over the period, with a stronger negative relationship likely in the latter elections, reflecting the increasing concentration by political parties on marginal constituencies after the 1997 election.

The relationship between marginality and campaign spending was expected to be negative and significant, both of which are supported by the results of the regressions in table 5.5, with a negative and significant relationship between the two variables both over the period as a whole and for *all* individual elections during the period. This indicates that at each election between 1987 and 2010, marginality significantly affected levels of campaigning; moreover the direction of the relationship indicates that as constituencies became safer (their previous majority increased), the overall level of campaign spending fell. It would therefore appear that marginality is an important influence on candidate expenditure.

Table 5.5: Linear regression examining the effect of marginality on overall campaign spending

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Previous majority	-.617** (.033)	-.771** (.099)	-.369** (.082)	-.468** (.057)	-.666** (.078)	-.744** (.068)	-.794** (.068)
Career tenure	-.188** (.067)	-.260 (.189)	-.143 (.161)	.062 (.118)	-.566** (.201)	-.443** (.143)	.105 (.129)
Marginality and career tenure interaction	.004 (.003)	.010 (.007)	.004 (.006)	-.003 (.004)	.010 (.006)	.007 (.005)	-.006 (.005)
Owner	-.128** (.015)	-.082 (.055)	.269** (.089)	.207** (.067)	-.144 (.095)	-.254** (.080)	-.180* (.073)
Retired	.043 (.031)	-.666 (1.324)	-.066 (.062)	.733** (.156)	.213 (.269)	-.274 (.189)	-.591* (.252)
Routine workers	-.957** (.070)	-1.258** (.400)	.196 (.136)	-2.341** (.441)	.079 (.321)	-.767** (.273)	-473* (.222)
Migrant	.341** (.070)	.263 (.154)	.380** (.129)	2.179** (.258)	1.263** (.396)	.687 (.362)	.415 (.229)
Adjusted r^2	.304	.221	.095	.457	.436	.412	.427

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The coefficient for marginality over the entire period indicates that for every percentage point rise in previous majority there was a drop of .617 percentage points in the average spent in a constituency. Yet disaggregating this into individual election years, the relationship is not of a constant strength. It was expected to increase over the period, particularly from 1997 onwards, with the success of Labour's targeting strategy and the adoption of targeted campaigning by the Conservatives in 2001. This is partially supported, with a notable increase in the coefficients of .198 percentage points between 1997 and 2001 and increases in both 2005 and 2010. The strongest coefficient for marginality can be observed in 2010, when for every percentage point increase in a constituency's majority, overall campaign spending fell by almost the same magnitude. However, the relationship is not quite as expected, with the second highest coefficient in 1987 (.771), an election where the lowest value was expected, with a drop in 1992 to .369. Looking at the national context, there was a landslide victory for Labour in 1997, and there was a strengthening of the relationship in 1997 from 1992, although as referred to above, the individual party figures are likely to reveal exactly which parties were doing the most strategic campaigning. It may be that in the context of the period, the overall relationship between marginality and campaign spending is high, with 1992 and 1997 actually being the exceptions with lower coefficients.

Although none of the regression coefficients for the interaction terms between tenure and marginality are significant, this does not mean that the interaction between the two variables themselves is not of interest. To explore in more depth, the interaction terms for each election year and the period as a whole were interpreted graphically. Over the period as a whole, and particularly in 1987 and 1992, the longer the incumbent's career tenure, the less impact marginality had upon overall campaign spending. In 2001 and 2005, the interaction indicates that the longer an incumbent's career, the lesser the impact of marginality on spending. However, there is more of a disparity according to how long the incumbent's tenure was. Although in 2005 in ultra-marginal constituencies, it was not the longest serving but those who had served between 8 and 12.5 years (corresponding to the 1997 intake) who had the shallowest line, implying that marginality had less of an impact on spending for this group.

The picture for 2010 is interesting, and more similar to 1997, coinciding with a change in government. The general direction indicates that as constituencies became safer, overall campaign spending fell. In the ultra-safe category, no matter how long the incumbent's career, spending was lower. However, in contrast to the previous election years, it *does not*

follow that the longer you serve, the lesser the impact of marginality on overall campaigning. In ultra-marginal constituencies, those with the longest tenures (13 years and above – the 1997 intake and previous) saw the highest overall levels of spending. This could potentially be a combination of Labour's defensive campaign plus an expansionist campaign strategy by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. This indicates that in 2010, the longer the career, the greater the impact of marginality on campaign spending, perhaps due to the uncertain electoral outcome.

The increasing redirection of resources away from safe constituencies from 1997 onwards is supported when observing the adjusted r^2 values for the models. Whereas in 1992, the model only explained 9.5% of variation in campaign spending, at elections from 1997 onwards it explained at least 41.2%. Therefore marginality accounts for a larger and increasing proportion of campaign spending variation in the latter part of the period than in the earlier elections, which is in line with expectations. The variations in the explanatory power of the model over the period are also likely to be attributable to the aggregate nature of the campaigning data.

For the control variables the relationships are likely to vary over the period according to party targeting their campaign spending; a clear example can be observed in owner occupiers. As seen in the previous chapter, higher levels of owner occupiers in a constituency have been associated with support for the Conservatives. Looking at the period as a whole, for every percentage point increase in the proportion of owner occupiers in a constituency overall spending fell by .128 percentage points. This could be due to more expansionist campaigning by the Conservatives later in the period, which is reinforced in the individual election years by a constantly negative relationship at elections from 2001 onwards. The coefficients for routine workers over the period support this, with a negative relationship over the 1987 and 2010 period; a percentage rise in the proportion of such workers leading to a drop in spending of almost the same amount. Disaggregating this into individual election years, the coefficient is negative and large in 1987, 1997, 2005 and 2010, yet positive in 1992 and 2005. The large coefficient for 1997 indicates that constituencies with higher proportions of routine workers (i.e. traditionally Labour constituencies) saw significantly lower overall levels of spending, probably as a result of targeting of other constituencies by Labour and a more defensive campaign by the Conservatives. For migrants, there are positive coefficients over the entire period and for all individual elections, three of which are significant. These indicate that overall between 1987 and 2010 the proportion of migrants in a constituency was significantly related to campaign spending, as

when the proportion of migrants in a constituency increased, so did the level of spending. These variations in the strength of the model and the coefficients indicate some instability in the relationship between marginality and spending, with parties varying their campaigning in marginal constituencies according to their local and national incumbency. The effect of local incumbency will be explored later in this chapter.

The model was rerun to examine the impact that marginality had on the two campaign measures. As before, marginality is the independent variable, overall levels of doorstep and telephone canvassing are the dependent variables, with all control variables retained to ensure that the conclusions were comparable. If marginality affects levels of canvassing, negative and significant results would be expected, indicating that as the previous majority increases, the level of telephone and doorstep canvassing falls. However, the relationship is likely to be more complicated than that for spending, as it may be easier for parties to canvass in their safe constituencies. The data are also far more limited than for spending, with far fewer constituencies having data for all three parties.

Table 5.6: Regression examining the effect of marginality on overall levels of doorstep and telephone canvassing

	Doorstep canvassing	Telephone canvassing
Previous majority	-.013 (.089)	-.334** (.113)
Career tenure	.560** (.191)	-.329 (.263)
Marginality and career tenure interaction	-.015* (.007)	.006 (.010)
Owner	-.082* (.036)	-.052 (.146)
Retired	.241** (.085)	-.001 (.351)
Routine workers	-.1.038** (.283)	-.326 (.513)
Migrant	.022 (.133)	-.212 (.700)
Adjusted r^2	.096	.193

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Although the adjusted r^2 results for both types of canvassing are low compared to the equivalent period in table 5.5, the model still explains 9.6% of variation in doorstep canvassing and 19.3% of variation in telephone canvassing. For both canvassing variables, a higher previous majority was related to lower levels of constituency coverage, although the coefficient was only significant for telephone canvassing. Career tenure was significantly related to doorstep canvassing, with longer tenures associated with higher levels of doorstep canvassing. Surprisingly, considering the reduced physical contact of telephone canvassing, it offers the better results, with the model having a better explanatory power. The marginality coefficient indicates that for every percentage point rise in previous majority, there was a significant drop in telephone canvassing of .334 percentage points. The relative strength of the coefficients between marginality and the respective measures of canvassing are interesting and offer support to Fisher and Denver (2009) who discovered that modern modes of campaigning (of which telephone canvassing was one) were far more likely to be used in marginal constituencies.

The interaction term between tenure and marginality offers a little more insight into the impact of marginality upon levels of canvassing. Looking firstly at doorstep canvassing, there is little variation in levels of such canvassing in constituencies of different marginalities where the incumbent's tenure is less than nine years. However, in constituencies with incumbents serving over nine years, the level of doorstep canvassing decreases the safer the seat becomes. Not only do longer tenures have a greater impact on the relationship between marginality and overall doorstep canvassing, but the levels of such canvassing are also far higher the longer the tenure. This conclusion is perhaps a little surprising and would seem to go against the spending data, which indicated that longer tenures lead to lower spends - instead the doorstep canvassing figures suggest that the longer the tenure, the higher the level of doorstep canvassing and the greater the impact of marginality. One possible explanation for this relationship may be the consideration of the resources required for doorstep canvassing. Such canvassing is hard to conduct without committed members and activists in the constituency. Although the figures only indicate overall levels of such canvassing, it may be that longer serving incumbents have built an activist base galvanised by their repeated electoral success (Seyd and Whiteley, 1998). In short, longer tenures may be associated with greater resources enabling higher levels of doorstep canvassing.

For telephone canvassing, no matter how long the tenure of the incumbent, the safer the constituency, the lower the level of telephone canvassing. However, in contrast to doorstep

canvassing, the longer the incumbent's tenure, the lower the level of such canvassing. The shorter the time the incumbent has served, the greater the impact of marginality on telephone canvassing, with the highest levels seen in ultra-marginal constituencies held by those in their first term.

These results indicate that the model is a far better fit for spending data in the latter part of the period than for the two canvassing variables, which have far lower explanatory values (except for spending in 1992); it could be that there are particular factors affecting canvassing levels but not spending levels in constituencies that the model does not cover. The fact that existing literature has demonstrated an association between campaign spending and the data from the agent surveys (from which the canvassing variables originate) (Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2008) on a party-by-party basis could mean that the aggregate data used are creating the issue. As reported above, only constituencies where all three parties had recorded responses for the canvassing variables were included in the aggregate figures to ensure fairness and an accurate record. However, this has dramatically restricted the number of available cases to examine in the model, and it may be that there are characteristics in constituencies where all three parties responded that could influence the results.

Different parties, different campaigns

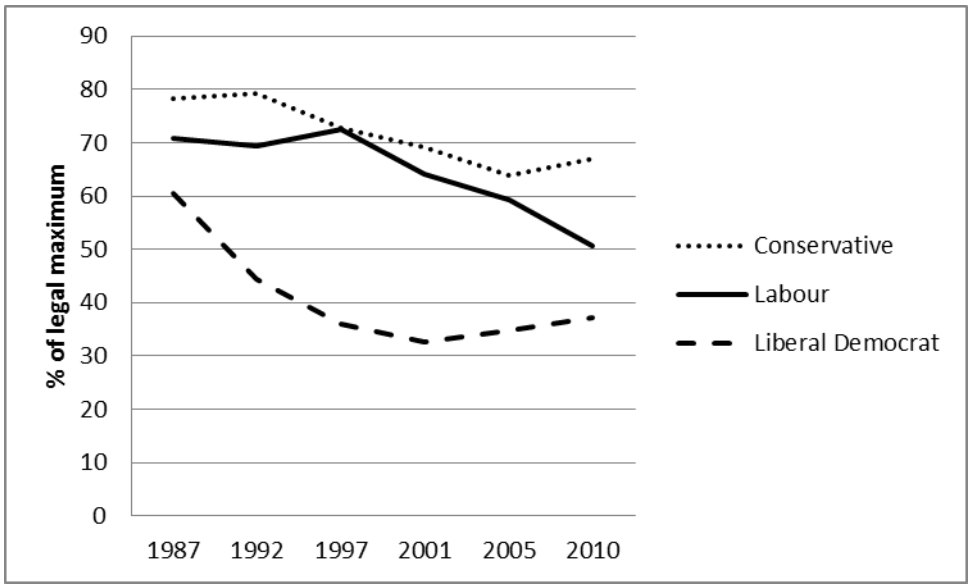
Although encouraging results regarding the overall hypothesis have been found so far, this section examines the nested hypothesis of whether *the impact of marginality on campaigning varies across parties*. By disaggregating the data examined previously the different campaign strategies of the three main parties over the period can be examined. The aggregate nature of the data studied so far means that it is possible that some conclusions in regards to individual party activity have been obscured, particularly in respect of the canvassing data. By exploring individual party responses, there are more data to test. Variation in levels of campaigning and its relationship with marginality should be observable between the parties for two reasons; available resources and national incumbency. The Conservatives, compared to the other two parties, were slowest to catch onto the potential of targeting campaigning on safe constituencies, with Pattie and Johnston (2003b) attributing this largely due to the strong nature of the local associations in Conservative safe constituencies. Labour in contrast have habitually run constituency campaigns targeted on marginal seats, utilised to greatest effect in their 1997 election victory. Once in power, the simplicity of the relationship became more

complicated, particularly as Labour had won many seats that they had not expected to. . In regards to available resources, the Liberal Democrats are the smallest party of the three and therefore have the smallest resources. Out of necessity, the party has 'husband[ed] its scarce resources' (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b: 392) by campaigning in marginal seats as the party has relatively few safe constituencies to rely on, unlike the other parties.

Trends in campaigning between the parties

To illustrate the variation in campaigning between the parties, graph 5.2 compares the mean spending figures for the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats at elections between 1987 and 2010. The Conservatives have, on average, spent the most at each election during the period. Their spending has, however, shown an overall decline over the period, from a high of 78.24 percent of the legal maximum in 1987 to a low of 63.88 percent in 2005 (with a slight rise in 2010). The next highest mean candidate spending was by Labour, peaking at 72.38 percent in 1997, before a slow decline at subsequent elections, reaching a low of 50.70 percent in 2010. It is interesting that the peak average spend was found in the election at which they won a landslide victory, with a slow decline during their term in power.

Graph 5.2: Mean candidate spending



Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

Of the three parties, the Liberal Democrats have on average spent the least over the period, with a particular contrast at the 1997 and 2001 elections. Indeed at the 2001 general election, the Liberal Democrats spent on average just over 32 percent of the legal maximum

Aside from the means, the standard deviations of the data (table 5.7) are an important way of examining variation around the mean[11]. A redirection of resources away from some (ostensibly safe) constituencies towards other (more marginal) constituencies could be indicated by larger standard deviation figures which would indicate greater variation in spending by each party. The smallest variation would be expected for the Conservatives, due to their early habit of spending highly in their own safe constituencies, and the greatest variation for the Liberal Democrats who have the least resources and therefore have to target their spending. Also, if an increase is to be seen in targeted campaigning by all parties, a general rise in the standard deviation figures for the period would be expected.

Table 5.7: Standard deviation figures for party campaign spending

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative	22.85	22.86	26.3	29.38	28.42	29.27
Labour	24.33	24.94	21.83	26.27	28.22	31.46
Lib Dem	28.85	32.35	31.2	29.58	29.79	33.76

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

As expected, at each election during the period, Liberal Democrat spending has consistently had the largest standard deviations of the three parties, indicating that there is greater variation in their spending, with particularly low spends in some seats and particular high ones in others. This fits in well with the idea that they are the party targeting the most, due to their limited resources. The difference between Liberal Democrat standard deviations and the other parties are particularly large in the earlier elections, reinforcing the idea that the

[11] Due to multiple standard deviation figures for each year, it has not been possible to present them in a clear format on the graph. For this graph and future occurrences where detailed discussion is needed, these figures are displayed in tables.

Liberal Democrats were the earliest adopters of strategic spending in the UK. The relationship for the two other parties is a little more complicated, however, with the Conservatives having the largest standard deviations of the two in 1997, 2001 and 2005 and Labour in 1987, 1992 and 2010. These smaller deviations accompanied by high means for the Conservatives in the earliest two elections of the period ties in with the evidence that the party generally spent highly with little variation amongst different constituency marginalities. Therefore there are indeed signs that the association between marginality and campaigning varies across parties.

Examining the variation between the parties for the two campaign activity variables (results in appendix 3) there are several key trends to extract. Firstly, there was a considerable decrease in doorstep canvassing between 1992 and 2001 for all three parties. Although the Conservatives ran the highest average doorstep canvassing over the period, they saw a fall from an average of 41.58 percent of a constituency covered in 1992 to 27 percent covered in 2001. Their higher levels of doorstep canvassing are likely to be due to their stronger local organisations which typically have higher active members than the other parties; there is more capacity for greater levels of doorstep canvassing to take place. Labour ran the second highest levels of doorstep canvassing, but saw the steepest falls of all, with a drop of over 8 percentage points at each election. Unsurprisingly given their relatively small size, the Liberal Democrats ran the lowest level doorstep canvassing, with on average 7.86 percent of a constituency canvassed on the doorstep in 2001. The standard deviations can tell us the degree of variation in levels of such canvassing, and an increase in targeted campaigning would be shown by an increased disparity in levels of canvassing. The figures for doorstep canvassing are mixed, with Labour showing a decrease in standard deviation for the canvassing data over the three elections from 26.80 to 19.98. There is a lack of consistency in the figures for the other two parties, with the Conservatives seeing a fall at the first two elections before a rise in the standard deviations in 2001 and the Liberal Democrats saw a rise in the standard deviation of their doorstep canvassing figures between 1992 and 1997, but a fall in 2001. This is interesting as it echoes not only the results from the spending figures, but also from existing literature that 2001 marked the first election at which the Conservatives adopted a concerted rational approach to campaigning.

These results are echoed by the telephone canvassing figures, which although only covering two elections provide some interesting results. For all three parties, the mean proportion of a constituency covered by telephone canvassing fell between 1997 and 2001, which may be

attributable to the growth in the use of the internet between elections, or indeed due to different constituencies responding to the survey. Of the three parties, Labour have run the highest level of telephone canvassing, with an average coverage of 19.36 percent in 1997, although they saw the largest drop of the parties of almost 8 points in 2001. It may be their proactivity in adopting new technology to contact voters coupled with their resources enabling them to carry it out. Indeed in 1997, they were the only party who managed to canvass 100% of a constituency via telephone. When looking at the standard deviations of the figures, there are falls between the two elections for both Labour and the Liberal Democrats, indicating not only were these parties canvassing less by telephone between the two elections, there was less variation, so there was an overall decline. In contrast, for the Conservatives, the standard deviations for the telephone canvassing figures actually increased between the elections, which imply an increase in targeted canvassing, with some constituencies receiving much higher levels than others.

Parties, marginality and campaigning

The last section has indicated some evidence of variation in constituency campaigns run by the three main political parties in the UK, with the standard deviation figures revealing that some constituencies saw a far lower level of campaigning than others. This section takes the aggregate multivariate relationship already explored in the chapter and disaggregates it into individual campaigning variables for each of the three parties under investigation, to examine whether there is variation in the rate at which marginality affects campaigning amongst them. The general trends in variation should be observable; that is a general increase in the influence of marginality on Conservative campaigning, a dip for Labour in 2001 and 2005 as they struggled to defend their massive landslide and an overall intensification by the Liberal Democrats.

To gain an initial sense of the patterns of the relationship between marginality and campaigning across the parties, bivariate correlations between the campaigning variables for each party and constituency marginality were conducted using the combined dataset. Spending by all three parties over the 1987 to 2010 period was both negatively and significantly correlated with marginality, supporting the idea that lower levels of campaigning are associated with constituencies with higher majorities. Of the three parties, the Conservatives have the strongest correlation at -.428, with Labour and the Liberal

Democrats having weak correlations. These results are reflected by the results of the correlations for the two canvassing variables which are once again negative and significant for all parties, although much weaker. Once again the Conservatives have the strongest correlations (-.204 for door and -.263 for telephone) of the three parties and the Liberal Democrats have the weakest. To illustrate how the campaigning variables and marginality are associated between the parties across the five categories of marginality, ANOVA tests were conducted in the combined dataset. This enables the means in the five categories to be examined to see whether they differ significantly from each other. Significant differences were found for spending with a significant fall in the ultra-safe category for all three parties. For the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, spending consistently falls as seats become safer, with the highest spend in ultra-marginal seats and lowest in ultra-safe seats (in the case of the Conservatives, there was a drop of over 13 percentage points between the two extreme categories). Labour, in contrast, spent most highly in their very marginal seats (5-9.99, the upper limit of marginal seats) over the period. These results were reflected by the ANOVA results using the two canvassing variables as dependent variables, with significant results for both the Conservatives and Labour. The anomaly here is the Liberal Democrats, where there were found to be no significant differences in the average doorstep and telephone canvassing across the categories. This may be due to the relatively small number of local Liberal Democrat activists in constituencies.

These correlations offer generally promising results associating marginality with campaigning by the three main parties, but to test this more thoroughly, multivariate regression analyses were conducted. To produce clear results comparable with the previous analysis, a near identical model was retained. Marginality is again the independent variable with the individual party campaign variables as dependents, running individual regressions for each variable for each party (so nine in total, three campaign variables for each of the three parties). The political controls are those identifying the length of the incumbent's career tenure and an interaction term between this and marginality as there is an association between the two. Four socio-demographic variables have been controlled for as previously. Table 5.8 below displays the summary regression coefficients between previous majority and campaign spending.

The coefficients for marginality from the results of the spending regressions in table 5.8 are in the expected direction for all three parties, both over the period and for all individual elections, but not all the results are significant. Of the three parties the Conservatives are the only party where previous majority is negatively and significantly related to their candidate

spending at each election during the period. The safer a constituency was between 1987 and 2010, the less money spent there by the Conservatives, controlling for other factors.

Table 5.8: Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between marginality and campaign spending on a party-by-party basis (full results in Appendix 4)

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservatives							
Previous majority	-.871** (.049)	-.687** (.148)	-.422** (.119)	-.510** (.082)	-1.091** (.120)	-1.319** (.099)	-1.007** (.110)
Adjusted r^2	.304	.090	.083	.528	.528	.526	.442
Labour							
Previous majority	-.452** (.059)	-1.053** (.148)	-.483** (.139)	-.814** (.086)	-.241 (.155)	-.197 (.150)	-.735** (.136)
Adjusted r^2	.095	.271	.092	.318	.101	.138	.259
Liberal Democrats							
Previous majority	-.529** (.067)	-.574** (.195)	-.203 (.180)	-.082 (.126)	-.666** (.164)	-.714** (.144)	-.639** (.151)
Adjusted r^2	.113	.080	.062	.249	.202	.170	.221

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The coefficients for the relationship between marginality and Conservative campaign spending between 1987 and 1997 are relatively low in comparison to later elections, which indicate that marginality had a comparatively lesser influence on campaign spending at these elections. However, even at its weakest in 1992, for every percentage point increase in a constituency's previous majority, Conservative candidates reduced their spending by .422 percentage points. This is likely to be due to the impact of incumbency, which, as explored in the next section, is an important influence on the relationship between marginality and campaigning levels. It was Conservative spending in their own safely held constituencies which was described as irrational by Pattie and Johnston (2003b), and the regression coefficients in table 5.5 do not disaggregate according to which party holds the local incumbency.

Pattie and Johnston (2003b) suggested that 2001 was the first election at which the Conservatives started to campaign strategically, and results from the table would appear to reinforce this with considerable jumps in the coefficients for the relationship to be very strongly negative in the last three elections. For example, in 2005, (the largest coefficient for Conservative spending over the entire period) for every percentage point increase in previous majority, campaign expenditure fell by 1.319 percentage points, Indeed, at all three elections from 2001, the difference to Conservative spending made by a percentage point increase in previous majority has been a decrease of over one percentage point.

Over the 1987 to 2010 period marginality has consistently has a strong impact on the amount of money spent by the Conservatives in constituencies, with safer seats seeing lower spending by party candidates, strengthening over the period. However, the r^2 values for these regressions are not always strong; the lowest value is 1992 when the equation explained only 8.3% of variation in Conservative spending. The coincidence of the lowest coefficient for the Conservatives over the period and the lowest explanatory power is interesting and might indicate that the coefficient could be boosted if different variables were incorporated into the model for this year. The explanatory power did rise considerably throughout the period (with a small dip in 2010), which reflects the increasing role of marginality in affecting spending.

The interaction terms between tenure and marginality offer a clear negative relationship with tenure having relatively little impact across the period on the relationship between marginality and Conservative spending. A key factor to point out in this assessment is that although length of tenure is being accounted for, the model does not identify the party the incumbent belongs to. While the next section explores the impact of local incumbency upon the relationship between marginality and spending in more detail, the interactions in table 5.8 can offer a brief insight. Over the period as a whole the interactions indicate that higher Conservative spending is associated with incumbents serving 14 years and above.

The interactions between tenure and marginality appear minimal in both 1987 and 1992, with longer serving incumbents seeing less impact on the relationship between marginality and Conservative spending than shorter tenures. Some support for less rational Conservative spending in 1987 may be that in the ultra-safe seats, the highest overall level of spending was by the longest serving incumbents (17 years and above). By breaking down the figures according to the incumbent party, twice as many of these longer serving MPs were Conservative.

In the elections spanning 1997 to 2005, the relationship between previous majority and Conservative spending grows steeper, with tenure having a minimal impact upon the relationship. In 2010, however, tenure appears to be having more of an impact upon the relationship between marginality and Conservative spending. With the exception of ultra-safe constituencies, those seats with the longest serving incumbents at this election saw higher levels of spending than shorter tenures. This may indicate a more expansionist Conservative campaign strategy, with 59.9% of these seats held by Labour (versus 32% held by the Conservatives).

The largest coefficient for the relationship between marginality and Labour spending over the period occurs in 1987, with a single percentage point increase in majority decreasing Labour candidate expenditure by over one percentage point. The relationship between the two variables is both negative and significant in 1992 and 1997, with campaigns run under 1997's Operation Victory showing the second highest coefficient, with a .794 percentage point decrease in Labour candidate spending for every percentage point the previous majority rose. As expected, the coefficients are insignificant in both 2001 and 2005, reflecting the earlier findings of the bivariate correlations, indicating that the large-scale defence of seats won in 1997 had affected the relationship. The electoral context of these elections is likely to have played a part in these results. Labour won a landslide victory in 1997, gaining 145 seats, many unexpectedly (previously safe Conservative seats) and defending such a large number of diverse seats necessitated a more defensive strategy at the 2001 election. This might account for the insignificance of the expected relationship, with Labour spreading their resources more evenly over a larger number of constituencies.

Over the period as a whole, tenure does have an impact on the relationship between marginality and Labour spending. The longest serving incumbents (those serving 14 years or more) have the greatest impact upon the relationship between marginality and spending by Labour, with a far steeper decline in spending the safer the constituency. However, as indicated by the coefficients for marginality discussed in the last paragraph, this does not necessarily follow for all elections over the period. The general impact of tenure in both 1987 and 1992 indicates that as an incumbents tenure increased, the previous majority had a greater impact on Labour spending, with safer constituencies seeing lower spending by the party the longer the incumbent had served. In 1997, the relationship between marginality and campaigning still suggests that the safer the constituency the lower the level of spend. However, observing the impact of tenure length upon this relationship offers interesting

results. In a change from the previous two elections, it is now those serving the longest tenures (of 14 years and above) who have the higher overall level of spending by Labour candidates. Of the seats occupied by these long serving incumbents, 60.82% of them are occupied by the Conservatives, which indicates expansionist campaign spending by Labour. As table 5.8 has illustrated, Labour spending in 2001 and 2005 is not straightforward, and thus the impact of tenure upon the relationship between it and marginality is also complex. Compared to the overall downward trend observed in earlier elections (where the longer the tenure, the greater the impact on the relationship between marginality and campaigning), the results for 2001 and 2005 indicate that although the level of Labour spending dropped the longer an incumbent had been in a seat, marginality did not affect this. In 2010, however, the downward trend between marginality and Labour spending was tempered by tenure length returns. For the shortest serving incumbents (59.6% of whom were Labour) in constituencies with previous majorities up to 14.99% there is a distinct drop in Labour spending the safer the constituency is. Yet spending rises in the two safest categories by these same incumbents, which could indicate a defensive campaign strategy.

The r^2 values for Labour are much lower than those for the Conservatives, with the model only explaining 9.2 percent of variation in spending in 1992. The coefficients for both 2001 and 2005 are also lower at 16.9 and 12.0 percent of variation respectively; results of the specific electoral context that Labour were in at the time. In the remaining three elections the model explains between 25.9 and 31.8 percent of variation. This sharp fall in 2001 and 2005 reflects the findings of the correlations in the previous section and suggests that marginality provides only a partial account for variations in campaign spending for Labour candidates in these years. Yet these years appear to be exceptions to the general relationship however, as by 2010 the coefficient was once again significant.

The results for the multiple regressions for Liberal Democrat candidates also support the relationship between marginality and campaign spending. Across the period covered in this analysis, the coefficients for Liberal Democrat candidate spending were all negative as expected, indicating that as the percentage majority increased, the level of campaigning fell, controlling for other factors. However, of these six values, those for 1992 and 1997 are both insignificant, which could be explained by 1992 being the first election at which the Liberal Democrats had fought as a single party (previously it had been the Alliance) which may have impacted upon the relationship. Also, in 1997, Labour and the Liberal Democrats operated a series of tactical campaigns in some constituencies which may have diminished the relationship between marginality and campaign spending for this year; the incumbency of

constituency is not identified, and it may be that in marginal constituencies held by the Conservatives where Labour were second, the Liberal Democrats campaigned less to give a tactical advantage to Labour. Excluding these two insignificant values, the remainder appear fairly stable, reaching a peak in 2005 when a single percentage increase in previous majority led to Liberal Democrat spending declining by .714 percentage points. The relative stability of the coefficients for all years except 1992 and 1997 implies that the Liberal Democrats established targeted campaigning early on in their life cycle and have applied it at elections since. Although these are lower than the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats have fewer resources. Like Labour, the r^2 values are weak, explaining between six and 27 percent of variation in campaign spending by Liberal Democrat candidates.

None of the interaction terms between tenure and marginality are significant, but they shall be examined in a little more detail. It could be expected that in the case of the Liberal Democrats, tenure may be less likely to have an impact on the relationship between marginality and campaign spending. Although the figures do not indicate party incumbency, the party have held comparatively few seats, but have been very rational in their spending approach. This implies that there should be a fairly clear relationship between marginality and Liberal Democrat spending because the party does not have to be concerned about the impact of incumbency. The 1987 election saw a greater impact of tenure on the relationship between marginality and Liberal Democrat (then Alliance) spending where the incumbent had served up to eight years, a trend echoed again in both 1992 and 1997. More so than in the previous elections, tenure has a clear impact in 2001, with the shorter the incumbency, the greater the impact of marginality on Liberal Democrat spending. A new incumbent in an ultra-safe seat saw a drop in the party's spending of almost 30 percentage points compared to the equivalent incumbent in an ultra-marginal seat. This implies a careful targeting of seats where an incumbent has had relatively little time to create their personal support base.

In 2005, the safer the constituency, the lower the Liberal Democrat spending, but this depended upon how long the incumbent had served. Where the incumbent had served 13 years and above (i.e. elected in 1987 or before) spending dropped quickly the safer the seat became. In seats where the incumbent had served 4 years or less (i.e. had been elected in 2001) Liberal Democrat spending dropped slightly less as the seat became safer, perhaps because there was a chance of seat change. In 2010, tenure had no impact on the relationship

between marginality and turnout where a constituency was safe. However, marginal seats saw a drop in spending the longer the incumbent had served.

The same model was run for the two selected campaign activity variables of telephone and doorstep canvassing to examine how the relationship between marginality and these variables varied between the parties. As before, the relationship should be negative, although more variation in the relationship is likely. The results for doorstep canvassing may be particularly variable for the Conservatives who have traditionally had the stronger local associations, which may enable a greater amount of such canvassing to be conducted. Labour were also at the forefront of using telephone canvassing, particularly in national or regional phone banks in 1997 so the relationships for that variable would be expected to be strong for the party in that year. Table 5.9 displays the coefficients for marginality in summary.

Table 5.9: Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between marginality and canvassing on a party-by-party basis (full results in Appendix 5)

	1992-2001	**1997-2001**
	Doorstep canvassing	*Telephone canvassing*
Conservative	-.140 (.102)	-.312** (.079)
Adjusted r^2	*.052*	*.059*
Labour	-.085 (.096)	-.317** (.102)
Adjusted r^2	*.051*	*.089*
Liberal Democrats	-.028 (.063)	-.012 (.051)
Adjusted r^2	*.024*	*.052*

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results for the marginality and canvassing variables across the three parties offer some guidance to the relationship with all relationships negative as expected. For the Conservatives, the coefficients between marginality and doorstep canvassing were negative over the period, although the result was insignificant. Marginality is significantly related to the proportion of constituencies covered by telephone canvassing, with a single percentage point increase in the previous majority leading to a drop of .312 percentage points in the

coverage. For Labour, the results are similar, with a negative but insignificant relationship between marginality and doorstep canvassing. The results for telephone canvassing in contrast indicate that the proportion of a constituency covered by telephone canvassing is significantly affected by the marginality of a constituency; the coefficient for this measure is slightly larger than for the Conservatives. For the Liberal Democrats, once again the results are varied with no significant results for either telephone or doorstep canvassing. A common feature for all of these regressions are the very weak r^2 values, with the highest value explaining just 8.9% of variation in Labour telephone canvassing in 1997. This was also a feature of the aggregate regression of the campaign activity variables.

The impact of tenure on the relationship between marginality and doorstep canvassing differs by party. For the Conservatives, the overall trend of safer constituencies seeing lower levels of such canvassing is reflected, but incumbents who have served four years or less show little discernable difference between different constituency marginalities. For those incumbents with tenures above four years, it does appear that the longer the incumbent's tenure, the greater the impact of marginality on Conservative canvassing. This is similar to doorstep canvassing by the Liberal Democrats, with marginality making little impact on the proportion of the constituency canvassed by the Liberal Democrats. As a general observation though, seats with longer tenures tend to see higher levels of doorstep canvassing by the party.

For Labour, tenure has a clear an impact upon the relationship between marginality and the proportion of the constituency canvassed by door. Incumbents with tenures longer than nine years show higher levels of doorstep canvassing by Labour, as well as a clear drop in doorstep canvassing across the marginality categories. In contrast, incumbents with tenures up to nine years show no relationship between marginality and L canvassing.

Both the interaction terms for the Conservatives and Labour show the relationship between marginality and levels of telephone canvassing by the parties altering according to different incumbent tenures. The shorter the tenure, the sharper the fall in the level of telephone canvassing as a constituency gets safer. However, for the Liberal Democrats, although constituencies with shorter tenures tend to have higher levels of telephone canvassing, there is no interaction between tenure and marginality.

These results indicate that marginality has a mostly significant impact on levels of spending, and that this varies across parties, with the Conservatives seeing the most consistent results during the period. The results for campaign activities are a little weaker, although a few key trends can be indicated. The key theme, which has emerged not only from the exploration of party differentials on the marginality and campaigning relationship but also in the earlier study into aggregate data, is the fit of the model.

Looking at the adjusted r^2 values for tables 5.8 and 5.9, the model best fits the spending data (particularly in the case of the Conservatives), with poor results for the two canvassing variables. There are five points to be made in regards to the fit of the model in this section; the first is the maintenance of a near identical model between the aggregate data of the last section and the party-specific data of this section. The only substantive change that was made to the model in this section was to introduce the party-specific dependent variables measuring campaigning: the changes were restricted in order that the results could be comparable to those from the aggregate regressions. Perhaps the model needed to be adapted for the comparison across parties. Secondly, the same model was retained for all three parties, so maybe this needed adjusting on a party by party basis, introducing different variables in order for the explanatory power to be kept more constant. However, the point of this section was to examine how the relationship between marginality and campaigning varied across parties and by creating essentially different models for each party would limit comparability. The parsimony of the existing model was also attractive, encompassing seven control variables covering a range of socio-demographics. It is possible that another reason that the model did not fit well across the period is that it was designed to examine the relationship between marginality and campaigning over a period of six elections. Lastly, the appropriateness of applying a multiple regression to the relationship should be considered. Looking back at existing research into the relationship, it is difficult to find any such model being created for the relationship. Pattie and Johnston (2009b) offer a simple regression not controlling for other factors, whereas authors often use a simple split of data into target status (Fisher and Denver, 2009:202) or marginality categories to describe the relationship. However, this does not take into account the incumbency of each party, which is important in safe constituencies.

Incumbency, opposition and marginality

The relationship between marginality and campaigning varies across the three parties studied in this thesis, although there is overall evidence of a decline of campaigning in safer constituencies. In this section, the hypothesis that *the impact of marginality on campaigning varies across incumbencies* is considered, using two nested hypotheses to explore the impact of incumbency on the relationship between marginality and campaigning. Levels of incumbent and opponent campaigning are contrasted between safe and marginal seats, with the expectation that campaigning by both types of candidate declines as constituencies become safer. Incumbency here refers to local incumbency, not national, utilising a party-based measure of incumbency accounting for both retiring MPs and constituency boundary changes. When the sitting MP (i.e. the one previously elected) has retired prior to an election, the candidate representing the same party will be classified as the incumbent, thereby enabling the examination of constituencies where the sitting MP has retired. There is a question in regards to what happens to a retiring MP's personal support (Curtice, Fisher and Ford, 2011), but mostly MPs retire after multiple elections, so the support base for the party would be relatively stable. The focus on party incumbency also allows for constituency boundary changes; when boundaries are changed, notional previous election results are created which identify the party which would have won the seat. The candidate belonging to this party is the incumbent. An opposition candidate has here been restricted only to those in second place – that is the party who came second in the previous election (whether actual or notional).

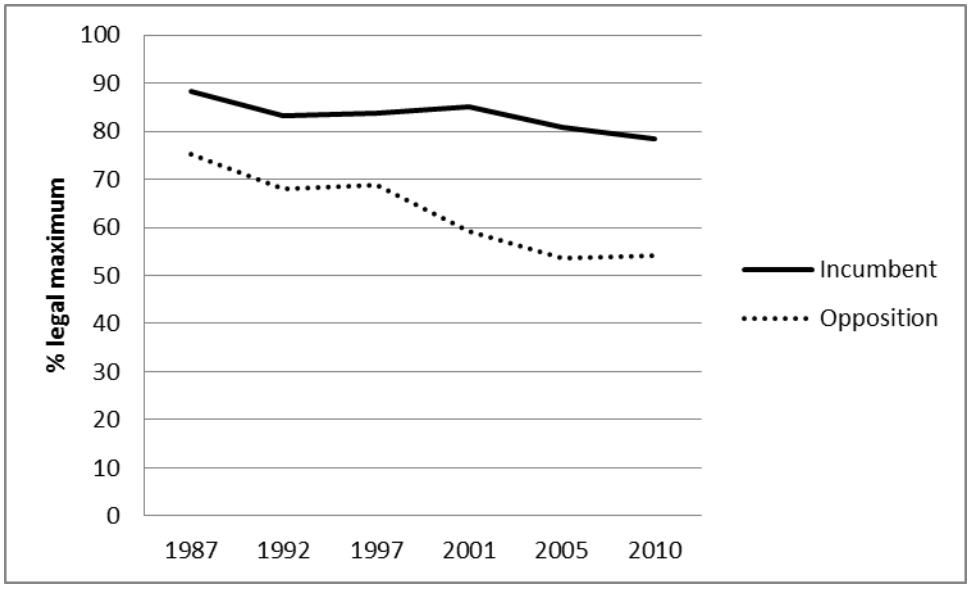
Incumbency matters when studying campaigning, with evidence (see Jacobson, 1978; Benoit and Marsh, 2010) that campaigning by non-incumbent candidates is considerably more effective than campaigns run by incumbents, even in different types of electoral system. Yet other research suggests that challengers spend highly in campaigns 'regardless of perceived marginality' (Erikson and Palfrey, 2000:603), which the authors attribute not only to a lack of experience, but also an overestimation of their likelihood of victory. The importance of incumbency in the UK has been examined by Johnston and Pattie (1995) in their study of campaign expenditure at the 1992 general election, with spending proving more effective for opposition candidates than for incumbents. These differences in campaign effectiveness by may be explained by candidate recognition. During an election campaign, incumbent candidates start from an advantage as they are likely to have a degree of recognition in the locality; many people may know their name, their record in Parliament and their positions on

policy issues. This is in contrast to opposition candidates, who are likely to be comparatively unknown and have a large amount of ground to make up to attain the same level of recognition as the incumbent.

Local incumbency is a vital consideration in a study focusing on safe constituencies as it affects campaigning levels to a far greater extent than in marginal seats, also altering the strategies of candidates. The interaction of incumbency on the relationship between marginality and campaign intensity is key, with ostensibly greater (easier) returns to be made from campaigning in marginal seats by opposition candidates. Marginal seats are more likely to change hands, so both the incumbent (defending their seat) and the opposition candidate (trying to gain the seat) are likely to campaign at similar levels. In contrast campaigning is likely to be of a generally lower level in safe constituencies, but the gap between incumbent and opposition campaigning will be greater as the incentives for opposition candidates to campaign are less.

To illustrate the impact of local incumbency on campaigning, all incumbents and opposition candidates were identified and aggregate spends for each category were calculated. Graph 5.3 illustrates the differences in campaign spending by incumbent and opposition candidates across the period. Even though the figures included in the graph do not take into account constituency marginality, a clear difference can be seen in campaign spending between incumbent and opposition candidates.

Graph 5.3: Incumbent and opposition spending



Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

Opposition candidates spend considerably less than incumbent candidates, and the difference increases over the period. Whereas incumbent spending varies by 9.90 percentage points over the period, opposition spending varies by 21.77 percentage points. Incumbent spending remains high over the period, falling below 80% of the permitted legal maximum in 2010 alone. However in both 2005 and 2010, opposition candidates spend on average just over half the legal maximum. Early indications of the impact of marginality on the incumbency relationship are revealed by the standard deviation figures (see Appendix 6), with consistently larger standard deviations for opposition candidates. These larger figures indicate that there is greater variation in opposition candidate spending, which could be explained by constituency marginality.

By introducing marginality into the examination of campaigning between incumbents and opposition candidates, the results of ANOVA testing enables comparisons of mean levels of campaigning to be made across the five categories of constituency. Dividing the campaigning variables into incumbents and opponents, ANOVA tests were run for each of the three campaigning variables to examine whether variation in campaigning across the marginality categories was more marked in opposition candidates. The full results can be seen in Appendix 7.

The results for incumbent candidates vary across parties in significance. For Conservative and Labour incumbents, there were significant differences in the amount spent across the five categories, with a particularly marked drop in ultra-safe seats. However, for Liberal Democrat incumbents, the variation in mean spending was not significant, although the two safest categories (very safe and ultra-safe) were over eight percentage points lower than the other three. For the two campaigning variables, there were insignificant variations for both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats; indeed telephone canvassing by incumbent Liberal Democrat MPs in ultra-safe constituencies was only higher in ultra-marginal constituencies. There were significant results for both canvassing variables for Labour, with large drops in the ultra-safe category.

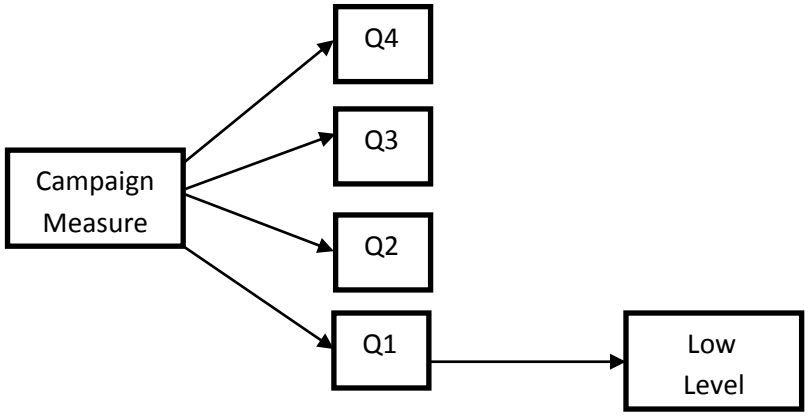
In contrast, the spending figures for opposition candidates are clear in their support for the importance of incumbency in the relationship between campaigning and marginality. The variation in spending by opposition candidates across the five categories was significant for all three parties, with large drops (of 17.2 and 16.3 percentage points) respectively in Conservative and Liberal Democrat spending between the very safe and ultra-safe category, whereas Labour spending drops between fairly safe and very safe). There are mixed results for the activity variables, with the Conservatives being the only party with significant results

for both doorstep and telephone canvassing, with the largest drops in the ultra-safe category. While there are significant variations in telephone canvassing by Labour opposition candidates, the results for doorstep canvassing are insignificant, with such canvassing second highest in the ultra-safe category. Neither campaign activity variable is significant for Liberal Democrat opposition candidates.

Identifying low level campaigns

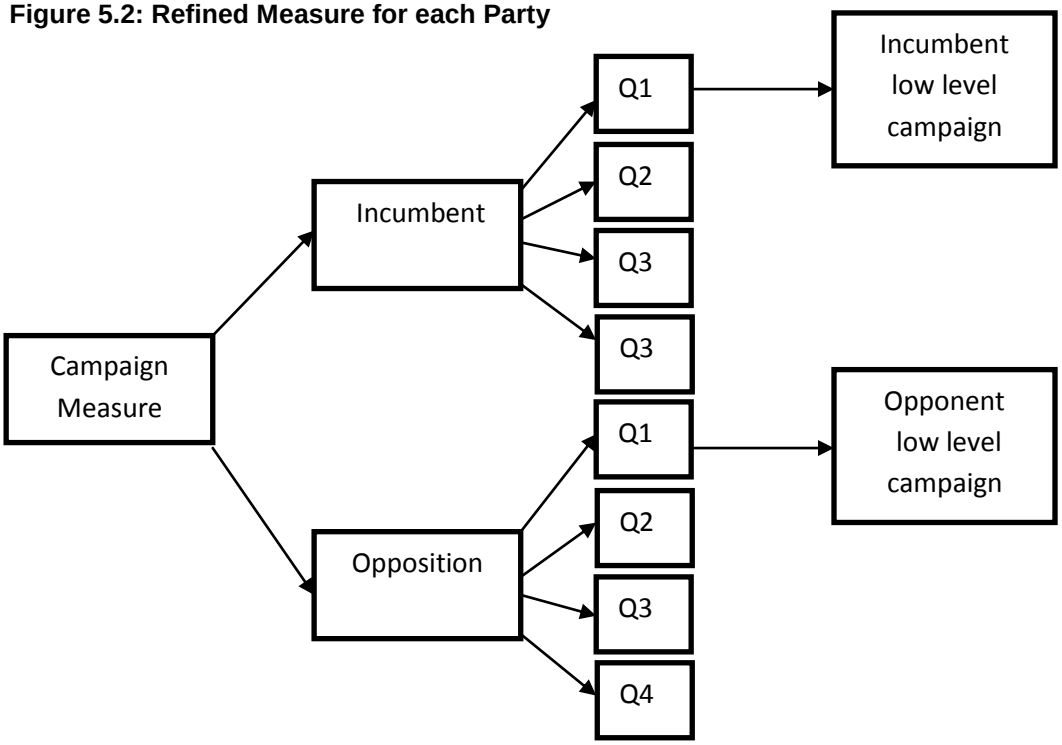
So far, when examining the relationship between marginality and campaigning (and the effects of party and incumbency), this chapter has utilised continuous measures of the campaigning variables. These allow us to identify lower levels of campaigning, but they do not indicate relative levels of campaigning; as seen in graph 5.2, the Liberal Democrats spend less overall, but the continuous measure does not enable this to be taken into consideration. An explicit measure has been developed to offer an easy way of identifying low level campaigns for this thesis, influenced by existing literature. Measures of levels of campaigning are infrequently part of constituency campaigning studies, with Pattie et al. (1994) and Denver, Hands and McAllister (2004) offering two examples. In their examination of the 1987 general election, Pattie et al. (1994:474) define relative levels of campaign effort by using scores from an index combining campaign spending and activity variables. With the scores centred on zero, a campaign registering a value greater than zero signifies 'above average constituency campaign effort' (Pattie et al. 1994:474), while those below zero indicate lower levels of campaigning. These scores apply only to a single party (Labour), and they are partly (in addition to spending data) based both on the results of Seyd and Whiteley's party member survey and self-reported data from the British Election Study, so there are issues of data access and coverage. Denver et al.'s (2004) comparative study of constituency campaign effectiveness covered the three elections between 1992 and 2001. In this study, scores of campaigning derived from the party agent surveys were divided into quartiles around the mean, ranging from low effort (first quartile) to high effort (fig 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Denver, Hands and MacAllister's (2004) measure of campaigning levels



The study found that the quartiles alter the effectiveness of constituency campaigning with Labour campaigns in the first quartile in 1992 actually reducing Labour vote share by 1.5 percentage points (p 298). This study is important for this thesis, as it is the only one which clearly links low levels of campaigning and a detrimental impact on vote share. Using this idea of a quartile-based measure of campaign levels, a more refined measure incorporating both party and incumbency differentials has been created for this thesis (fig 5.2), with the first quartile identifying low level campaigns.

Figure 5.2: Refined Measure for each Party



The first alteration that has been made is the production of party-specific measures. Campaigning varies between parties, with the Liberal Democrats spending considerably less than both Labour and the Conservatives. Creating a single measure for all three parties risks skewing the measure: for example, whereas the average spend across all constituencies for Labour and the Conservatives differs by a maximum of 17 percentage points in 2010, the mean difference between the Liberal Democrats and Labour (the next closest party) was 23.56 percentage points. A measure clearly specific to each party enables comparisons to be made of levels of campaigning in regards to that party's individual capacities. The second key alteration made to the existing measure is the incorporation of incumbency identifiers. The last section demonstrated that incumbency affects the level of campaigning, with opposition candidates more likely to run lower level campaigns, particularly in safe seats. It is therefore important that this is identified when measuring levels of campaigning, as not to do so could lead to over-estimation of the levels of opponent campaigning by raising the mean. Quartile measures were produced for all three of the campaign variables.

In each constituency, the local incumbent and opposition (the party in second place) parties were identified. This meant that there were six possible incumbency scenarios for the parties: Conservative incumbent, Conservative opponent, Labour incumbent, Labour opponent, Liberal Democrat incumbent and Liberal Democrat opponent. In all constituencies, each party-specific measure of campaigning was sorted into these scenarios in turn. Quartiles were then able to be calculated for each scenario, and codified as binary variables. These variables were created to speedily identify the incumbency, party and quartile of a campaign: for example Conservative Incumbent Quartile 1 (shortened to CIQ1). This provided party-specific measures able to be used in exploring the impact of such campaigns on vote share.

This thesis examines the effects of low level campaigns on local electoral outcomes; operationalised as turnout and vote share. The key difference between these two variables is the ability to trace the results for each party. Party vote share gives an idea of party support in the constituency, and linking this to campaigning (with the ability to control for other parties campaigning in the same constituency) is fairly straightforward; the simple binary variables created can be used in analysis. Yet the relationship between campaigning and turnout is more complex as turnout is a non-party-specific figure, so adjustments need to be made.

In using the binary variables to examine turnout (fig 5.3) , influence is taken from Denver et al. (2004), who combined the figures for the top two parties and used the result as the basis for analysis. The measure developed here is based on the party-specific binary identifications

described above, but it combines the quartiles for the incumbent and opposition in a constituency. This turnout measure combining the levels of campaigning by the top two parties means that unequal levels of campaigning and their effect on turnout can be investigated; for example it is possible to isolate those campaigns where both the incumbent and opposition ran low level campaigns (1:1). Campaigns where the levels of campaigning are unequal can also be explored, such as where either the incumbent or opponent campaigned at a higher level than the other. All possible scenarios may be seen in the matrix displayed in table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Matrix indicating all scenarios of combined relative levels of campaigning

	Opposition Quartile 1	**Opposition Quartile 2**	**Opposition Quartile 3**	**Opposition Quartile 4**
Incumbent Quartile 1	1:1	1:2	1:3	1:4
Incumbent Quartile 2	2:1	2:2	2:3	2:4
Incumbent Quartile 3	3:1	3:2	3:3	3:4
Incumbent Quartile 4	4:1	4:2	4:3	4:4

As shorthand, the relative levels of campaigning by the top two candidates are indicated with I for incumbent and O for the opposition. So a constituency in which both the incumbent and opponent ran a campaign in the first quartile was assigned a combined measure of I1O1. Each scenario in this table has been codified as a binary variable.

To explore whether low level campaigns were most likely to be run in safe constituencies, independent samples t-tests were conducted with percentage majority as the test variable, and either the combined measure of campaign levels (for turnout) or the single measure (for vote share) as the grouping variable. Lower levels of campaigning are expected in constituencies with higher previous majorities. Tables 5.11 and 5.12 show the abbreviated results for the singular party measure to be used in examining the impact of low level campaigns on vote share (full results for both tables are in appendix 8). If the link between low level campaigns and safe constituencies is to be borne out, negative values for the t-test statistics are to be expected which indicate that low level campaigns are run in constituencies with higher previous majorities than those with higher levels of campaigning.

Table 5.11: T-testing low level campaign spending (single measure) and previous majority (full results in Appendix 8)

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Incumbent spend						
Conservative	-4.337**	-1.299	-3.290**	-.455	-1.276	-3.147**
Labour	-2.769**	-2.384*	-5.498**	-9.585**	-7.569**	-5.964**
Liberal Democrat	.829	.247	-.916	-1.189	-1.686	-2.587*
Opponent spend						
Conservative	-7.574**	-5.291**	-10.131**	-17.251**	-15.400**	-10.951**
Labour	-5.882**	-1.122	-8.916**	-1.549	-2.761**	-4.344**
Liberal Democrat	-8.043**	-3.300**	-6.847**	-6.504**	-4.508**	-8.460**

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N=3804. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results shown in both tables mostly support the link between safe constituencies and low level campaigns, particularly for opposition candidates. The results for Conservative incumbent candidates are in the expected direction in all but two cases, with four significant. All t-test values for low level campaigns for Conservative opposition candidates are negative which indicates that the constituencies with these types of campaigns (whether low spending, doorstep canvassing or telephone canvassing) are safer than other constituencies. Importantly, almost all are significant, except the telephone canvassing result for 1997, with particularly strong values for spending in 2001 and 2005. In 2001, the mean previous majority for constituencies running higher level spending campaigns by Conservatives candidates in second place was 20.15%, whereas for constituencies where such candidates were running low level campaigns was 46.33%. Existing literature indicates that Conservatives spend highly in their safe constituencies, but table 5.10 demonstrates that Conservative incumbents running lower level campaigns were in constituencies 4.77 percentage points safer on average than those running more intense campaigns. Literature attributes this higher spending to the stronger local associations in Conservative safe constituencies, and the indications from the doorstep canvassing results for Conservative incumbents offer this some support. In 1992 and 1997, although insignificant, lower-level doorstep canvassing campaigns by the party were run in safer constituencies than higher levels of campaigning.

Table 5.12: T-testing low level canvassing (single measure) and previous majority (full results in Appendix 8)

	1992	1997	2001
Proportion of constituency canvassed on the doorstep by incumbent			
Conservative	.417	.096	-1.155
Labour	-3.324**	-4.603**	-5.634**
Liberal Democrat	.508	-.010	-1.771
Proportion of constituency canvassed on the doorstep by opposition			
Conservative	-3.771**	-3.902**	-6.085**
Labour	-3.835**	-.811	-2.888**
Liberal Democrat	-.714	-1.181	-2.381*
Proportion of constituency canvassed via telephone by incumbent			
Conservative		-2.055*	-.677
Labour		-1.991*	-7.248**
Liberal Democrat		-2.091	-1.565
Proportion of constituency canvassed via telephone by opposition			
Conservative		-.121	-9.172**
Labour		-2.818**	-4.431**
Liberal Democrat		-1.054	-3.522**

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N= 1911. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results for Labour in the majority of cases support the claim that low level campaigns are run in safe constituencies. The relationship is as expected, with negative values, for incumbent candidates, whereas the values for their opposition candidates are in the expected direction for all three campaign variables. Variations in spending peaked in 2001, with constituencies running lower levels of campaign spending having average majorities of 42.1 percent versus 26.58 percent in those running higher level campaign spends. For opposition candidates, the values are all in expected direction, although only four are significant for spend and one is insignificant for doorstep canvassing. The largest variation in campaign spending by Labour opposition candidates is in 1997, which is to be expected due to the targeted nature of that year's campaign. The results of Liberal Democrat incumbents and low level campaigns are mixed, with the results for spending only negative for three elections and only the value for 2010 significant; there are similar results for the two canvassing

variables, with no significant results. It would appear that there is little evidence that low level campaigns are being run by Liberal Democrat incumbents. This may be due to the fact that relatively few constituencies held by the Lib Dems are safe, so most of their incumbencies are marginal constituencies, necessitating a defensive strategy. In contrast, the results for low level spending and Liberal Democrat opposition candidates are striking, with all in the expected direction at each election for all campaign variables. This is not unexpected, with the Liberal Democrats having far fewer resources than the other parties, necessitating targeted campaigning; it would appear that Liberal Democrat opposition candidates are targeting hard.

Next the combined measure for the top two parties was tested, with the modifications enabling relative levels of campaigning by incumbent and opposition parties to be studied alongside the overall level. Independent samples t-tests were run between previous majority and a binary variable indicating the combined quartile measure, when at least one party was running a low level campaign. The relative levels of campaigning are indicated in the table with I identifying the quartile of the incumbent's campaign and O identifying the opposition's level of campaigning.

Table 5.13: T-Testing low level campaign spending (combined measure) and previous majority

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Spending						
I1, O1	-6.263**	-3.679**	-8.525**	-10.541**	-9.363**	-9.011**
I1, O2	-1.508	-1.422	-4.175**	-2.447*	-2.496*	-1.791
I1, O3	-.548	1.408	1.196	5.418**	4.197**	-.472
I1, O4	2.894**	.796	4.086**	3.638**	2.549*	2.089*
I2, O1	-5.752**	-2.057*	-4.872**	-7.275**	-6.045**	-6.216**
I3, O1	-3.327**	-2.633**	-6.667**	-3.947**	-3.548**	-2.160*
14, O1	-3.619**	-1.627	-4.256**	-1.576	-1.856	-2.240*
Doorstep						
I1, O1		-1.587	-3.618**	-2.838**		
I1, O2		1.242	-1.942	1.051		
I1, O3		-1.791	-.710	-.138		
I1, O4		-.390	.318	-.633		
I2, O1		-1.154	1.068	-4.259**		
I3, O1		-1.033	.997	-2.745**		
I4, O1		-3.497**	-1.143	.362		
Telephone						
I1, O1			-.705	-5.747**		
I1, O2			-.613	-.456		
I1, O3			-1.902	.005		
I1, O4			5.182**	-.237		
I2, O1			-.276	-1.231		
I3, O1			.237	-2.877**		
14, O1			.758	1.082		

*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Incumbent candidate score indicated with I and opposition candidate score indicated with O.*

All constituencies where both the opposition and incumbent candidate ran low level spending campaigns (I1O1) are negative and significant, which indicates that these constituencies are significantly safer than those with other levels of campaigning. The peak

in this variation was in 2001 when constituencies where both parties ran low level campaigns having an average majority of 43.22 percentage points versus an average majority of 21.24 percentage points for constituencies that ran higher level campaigns. When the incumbent campaign spend remains low level and the opposition candidate spend increases (I1O2-4) the number of significant results gradually drops off to three in I1O2, although the results for the other years are in the expected direction. However, when incumbents are running low level campaigns and opposition candidates run campaigns in the third and fourth quartiles (I1O3 and I1O4), there is a considerable change not only in the number of significant results, but also in the direction of the results. Interestingly, when comparing these results to constituencies where opposition candidate spend remained in the first quartile and incumbent spending was in higher quartiles (I2O1, I3O1, I4O1), all results are negative and most the variations are significant. It would appear from these results that for the combined measure to be significantly correlated with marginality relies a great deal on whether the opposition candidates are spending at a low level.

Conclusion

Existing literature has often indicated that campaigning and marginality are closely related, with parties concentrating their campaigning on marginal constituencies. The evidence from this chapter would appear to support this; safer constituencies often see significantly lower spends than more marginal constituencies. This relationship varies over the period covered by this thesis, but even when taking other factors into account marginality remains a significant explanation for constituency campaign spending. It also affects the amount of doorstep and telephone canvassing conducted in constituencies, although this relationship is less clear.

This relationship between marginality and campaigning is also more complex than it first appears, varying according to parties and incumbencies. Of the three parties, the Liberal Democrats target their campaign spending most strategically, attributable partially to their relatively small resources compared to Labour and the Conservatives. The Conservatives are strategic in their campaign spend even in the earlier part of the period, perhaps more so than they are often given credit for. Ultimately different parties not only have different priorities at elections (retaining/attaining power), but also different capabilities (the strength of local associations for example).

A new explicit measure of low levels of campaigning has also been developed, which enables the identification of the level of campaigning in a constituency, relative not only to other parties, but also in relation to other constituencies as well. This measure builds and improves on an earlier model proposed by Denver et al by including both party and incumbency differentials. When examining how this measure relates to the campaigning measures, low level campaigns were run in safer constituencies, particularly by opposition candidates. Incumbency is a vital factor in understanding the relationship between marginality and campaigning. Being the opposing candidate in a constituency has a significant impact on the relationship between marginality and campaigning, with such candidates showing significantly lower levels of spending than incumbent candidates. These differences occur between marginal and safe constituencies, but also within safe seats. Both opposition and incumbent parties campaign less in safe constituencies, particularly when that constituency is ultra-safe. Within safe seats, opposition candidates are more likely to run low level spending campaigns.

Linking campaigning and marginality is the first step in examining the potential impact of a lack of campaigning in safe constituencies. I argue that parties should consider the repercussions of their campaign strategies in safer constituencies; by running low level campaigns they run the risk of not only harming turnout, but their own share of the vote. The next two chapters explore this proposition in some detail by looking at the impact of low level campaigning on local electoral outcomes.

Chapter 6

Low level campaigns and turnout change: does absence breed apathy?

Marginality and campaigning levels are closely related, with the previous chapter establishing a clear link between low levels of campaigning and safe constituencies. This chapter addresses turnout at UK general elections, putting it into context by considering explanations for variation in turnout levels and examining whether campaigning plays a role in affecting it. The relationship between campaigning and turnout as understood here originates from rational choice theories of voter behaviour. Here campaigning acts as a conduit through which parties can contact voters and provide them with information on policies and candidate positions. Such information reduces the costs of voting, with intense campaigns increasing turnout. Existing research on constituency campaign effectiveness in the UK largely utilises measures of party performance (including vote share) while a relatively small number examine the impact of campaigning upon turnout (often in tandem with party performance – see Denver et al., 2004; Fisher and Denver, 2009). This can be attributed to the arguments by the Nuffield studies that local campaigning was ineffective because it failed to affect party performance. In offering a counter to this argument, the focus of researchers has tended to be on party performance. Yet those studies which have investigated the impact of campaigning upon turnout have often found that local campaigning is effective in raising the proportion of voters turning out.

This chapter begins the exploration of the third sub-hypothesis of the thesis; that the level of campaigning has an impact of local electoral outcomes, here concentrating on whether *low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on turnout*, with the next two chapters considering vote share and leader visits. As part of this, the role of incumbency in affecting the relationship between campaigning and turnout is also considered.

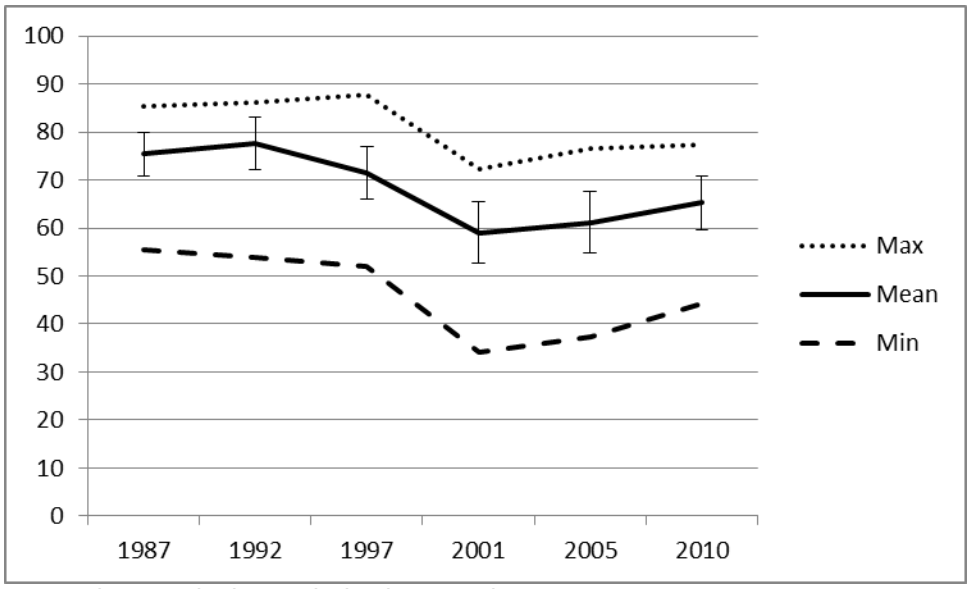
Voter turnout at UK general elections from 1987 to 2010 is explored, focusing particularly on the potentially detrimental effects of low level campaigns upon constituency turnout. The chapter offers an overview of trends in turnout over the period, placing the figures in historical and international context. With the aim of constructing a multivariate model, potential explanations for variation in turnout other than campaigning are examined, drawing on existing literature; these include tenure and constituency demographic profiles. Once the

model has been constructed, considering the implications of interactions and selecting the best variables, the relationship between low levels of campaigning and falls in turnout is tested both implicitly (with continuous measures of campaigning) and explicitly (using the low level identifiers as constructed in the last chapter).

Turnout 1987-2010

To understand turnout, a series of descriptive analyses were conducted, exploring not only the average constituency turnout over the period, but also the amount of variation in turnout levels. Electoral context is likely to affect turnout levels, with peaks at elections where there is a change of government and lower turnout figures when the result of the election was widely anticipated. Prior to the period covered by this thesis voter turnout in the UK ranged between 70 and 80 percent, with the average across elections between 1928 and 1983 being 77.19 percent, although in 1950 and 1951 mean turnout rose above 80 percent. Graph 6.1 displays the results of the descriptive turnout data from 1987 to 2010.

Graph 6.1: Patterns in turnout 1987-2010



Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

The story of turnout between 1987 and 2010 is one of steep decline and slight recovery; while mean turnout in 1987 compared favourably to historic trends at 75.42 percent, by 2010 turnout had fallen over ten percentage points to 65.23 percent. However, this decline has not been constant over the period; there was a slight increase of 2.16 percentage points in 1992,

before a dramatic drop in turnout by 12.47 percentage points in 2001, although there has been a gradual increase at each of the two subsequent elections.

Turnout may have been expected to peak at elections where there was a change of government because of the increased incentive to vote offered, but this has not clearly been shown by graph 6.1. Although there was a rise in mean turnout of 4.16 percentage points at the 2010 election, in 1997 turnout actually fell by 6.1 percentage points from 1992. These differing figures are also likely to be complicated by the widespread anticipation of result of the 1997 election was, which may have depressed turnout. However, in 2010 the result was far more uncertain, with many commentators predicting a hung parliament.

The steep fall in turnout at the 2001 election is interesting, particularly as it was this election at which the incumbent Labour government launched Operation Turnout to secure a second term in power. This was a clear statement of 'a central strategic concern' (Wring, 2001: 913) to mobilise weak Labour supporters (those who had voted for Labour for the first time in 1997, and that the party believed would stay at home) fearing apathy could drive them from office (Seyd, 2001: 618). Despite these efforts, turnout figures fell dramatically in 2001, with the average reaching just 59.01 percent, the lowest turnout since universal suffrage. This could be attributed to three key factors; the failure of Operation Turnout to engage new Labour voters, the failure of the Labour administration to deliver their policy programme or the likelihood of Labour winning power. Perhaps recent Labour supporters, the target of the Operation, *were* actually mobilised to turn out and vote, but it was apathy by other groups, such as (disaffected) supporters of other parties and floating voters that may have depressed the mean figure. Alternatively Clarke et al. (2004) attribute the drop in 2001 largely to the failure of the incumbent Labour administration to deliver election promises, but also due to the neglect of their heartlands. In areas which strongly supported Labour, voters had been alienated by the lack of dramatic policy changes during the Labour's government's first term in power. As Clarke et al. argue, turnout dropped in 2001 because dissatisfied Labour supporters predominantly chose to stay at home, with higher Labour vote shares being correlated with lower turnouts.

The result of the 1992 election was close, with polls fluctuating between a Conservative and Labour victory after a long Conservative incumbency, and turnout was high. The 1997 election was an important election as it heralded a new government, and even though turnout had declined, it was still above 70 percent. 1997 could be seen as a critical election (see Key, 1955), which induced more people to vote, and therefore, once this critical time period had passed, this motivation to turn out and vote in elections decreased. In contrast, the 2001

election was seen by many to be a foregone conclusion, with Labour widely expected to retain power; a sense enhanced and reinforced by the media (Clarke et al., 2004: 9). Perhaps by 2001, the urgency for people to turn out was not quite there as it had been in 1997. Turnout subsequently recovered slightly in 2005 (up 1.88 percentage points) and again in 2010 (up 3.91 percentage points). The larger increase in 2010 could be attributed to the more critical nature of the election where the polls had indicated an uncertain outcome.

The minimum turnout figures for the period are particularly interesting as, according to rational choice theories of voting, the safer a constituency is the lower the turnout figures as there is less to gain by voting. Most striking is the dramatic drop in 2001 from a minimum turnout of 51.90% to 34.10%. This low figure of minimum turnout pulls down the average turnout for 2001 to 59.01% which is striking, considering that at the previous election the minimum turnout was just 7.11 percentage points below this figure at 51.90%. The constituencies with the lowest turnout figures were identified at each election. In five out of the six elections, the constituency with the lowest turnout was held by Labour, and they were typically inner-city constituencies. The only election at which the constituency with the lowest turnout was held by another party was in 2005 when South Staffordshire recorded a turnout of just 37.21%, although the context there was slightly different as the election was postponed due to the death of a candidate, not taking place until 23rd June. Discounting this constituency, all six elections saw the lowest turnouts in Labour constituencies, with Liverpool Riverside having the lowest turnout in 1997, 2001 and 2005. The figures for maximum turnout vary across the period, but a similar pattern to the mean figures can be observed, with one clear difference; a peak in turnout in 1997. Whereas mean turnout peaked at 77.58 percent in 1992, maximum turnout peaked at 87.8 percent in 1997.

Table 6.1: Standard deviations in turnout 1987-2010

1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
4.48	5.41	5.57	6.36	6.41	5.57

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

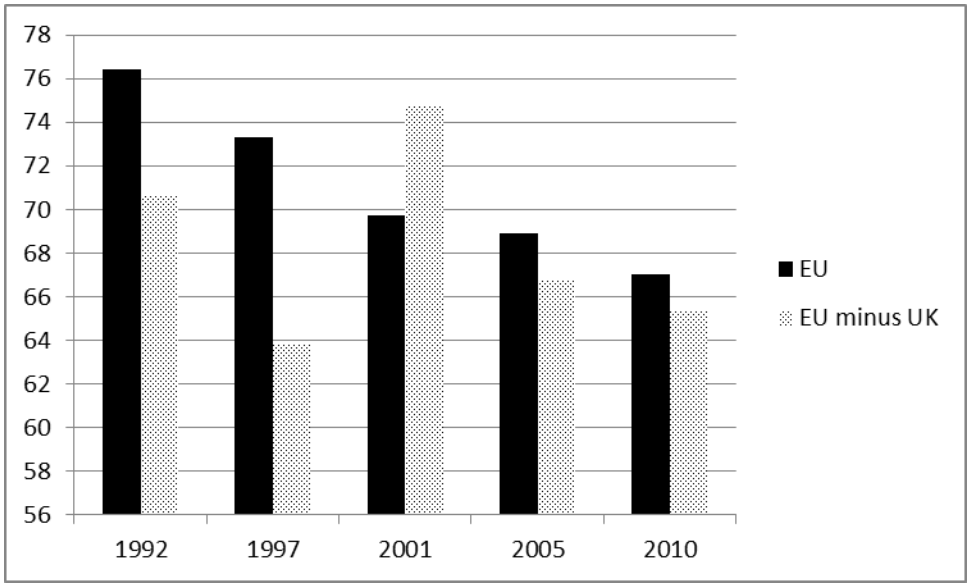
The standard deviation figures are at their lowest in 1987 at 4.48 percentage points. This deviation increases at each subsequent election before peaking at 6.41 percentage points in 2005. This suggests, along with the accompanied drop in the mean, that constituency turnouts varied increasingly over the period, with some seeing particularly high turnouts and other seeing very low figures. The growing variation in the figures indicates that most

constituencies have experienced falls in turnout, but it is the aim of this chapter to examine whether this increasing variation in turnout can be attributed to a combination of constituency marginality and associated campaign targeting strategies.

Constituency turnout in the latter part of the period under study is not only low, but historically lower than at any point since universal suffrage in the UK. It is possible that this decline is not confined to the UK, but is a more widespread fall in political engagement. Gray and Caul (2000), in their examination of turnout trends in 18 nations between the 1950s and 2000 found a general pattern of decline over the period. Of the nations examined as part of this study, the UK's decline in turnout sits at 9th (-6.3), with greater falls in turnout in the USA, Germany, France and the Netherlands. Switzerland saw the largest fall in turnout of -23.8, which Gray and Caul attributed to the tripling of the voting population over the period of study. Therefore turnout in the UK fell at a comparable level to other industrialised nations between the 1950s and 2000, indicating a wider trend of declining participation, but this study does not cover the dramatic drop of 2001. To examine whether this fall was also symptomatic of a wider trend of declining turnout, national turnout figures have been taken from Eurostat (2011). For each UK general election year, Eurostat was used to source data on turnout at national elections occurring in other EU member states to explore whether the sharp drop in turnout post 1997 was reflected in other EU nations.

Two sets of data from Eurostat were calculated and entered into graph 6.2 which shows the mean turnout figures for the EU including and excluding the UK. In both 1992 and 1997, EU turnout was higher when including UK figures which boosted them by 5.78 and 9.46 percentage points respectively. However, in 2001, the low turnout in that year's general election supressed the EU average by 5.07 percentage points. In the last two elections covered by the graph turnout in the EU and the EU minus the UK is far more similar. These results indicate that UK turnout is generally comparable with figures for other European nations, except in 2001 when it was significantly lower than the average turnout in the EU.

Graph 6.2: EU mean turnout including and excluding UK 1992-2010



Source: Eurostat 2011

The initial investigations into turnout patterns in the UK over the 1987 to 2010 elections have demonstrated that turnout fell dramatically in 2001, with a slight recovery in subsequent elections. This occurred despite Labour's Operation Turnout which was their concerted effort to retain power by encouraging their supporters to turn out and vote. The standard deviations for turnout also rose throughout the period, peaking in 2005, indicating that there is much variation in turnout across the UK. Turnout dropped from 1997 onwards, and the 2001 mean turnout of 58.99% was significantly lower than any other election since universal suffrage, including the 1945 general election when many soldiers were yet to return. The decline in turnout in the UK in the period between 1950 and 1997 appears average when compared with other countries, but when examining data in turnout for the post-1997 period in EU countries, it would appear that UK turnout has been below the EU average in both 2001 and 2005.

Variations in turnout

While overall turnout dropped sharply in 2001, before recovering slightly, there has been a great deal of variation in turnout between constituencies. In 2001 for example, while Winchester saw a turnout of 72.3 percent, Liverpool Riverside had a turnout of just 34.1 percent. This section considers competing contextual and compositional explanations for variations in turnout by drawing on existing literature. This analysis is undertaken not only to initially explore the relationship between campaign levels and levels of turnout, but also to consider the roles of other variables which may also account for variation in turnout, with the aim of constructing a model to be used to examine the relationship at a multivariate level later in this chapter.

Length of tenure

The previous chapter demonstrated the importance of tenure length in affecting levels of campaigning, with an initial burst of campaigning by first-term MPs to retain their seat and establish a personal vote, but lessening the longer the tenure. Similarly, the length of an incumbent MP's tenure is also likely to be related to turnout: as the incumbent campaigns less and relies on their personal vote, local voters are not being engaged by the campaign raising the costs of finding information with which to make their decision to vote. Jacobson explored this in his examination of Congressional elections (1980) in which he identified a definite 'first term effect' when new candidates are elected. First-term incumbents were associated with higher levels of turnout than other types of incumbents. However, after this first term, there was indeed a considerable fall in turnout the longer the incumbent served; the longer the incumbent's tenure, the lower the turnout in that constituency is likely to be. The previous chapter also illustrated that opposition candidates in safe constituencies were more likely to run significantly lower level campaigns than those in marginal constituencies. This means that in safe constituencies, where MPs are more likely to be serving longer tenures, voters will also be receiving minimal cues from the opposition candidates, leading to a decline in turnout.

To consider whether this might be the case, the three measures of tenure (seat, career and first-term tenure) as created in the previous chapter, were compared to percentage changes in

turnout between elections. Seat tenure and career tenure were continuous measures and the first-term incumbent variable was a simple binary, offering a range of ways in which tenure can be measured across boundary changes. The two continuous measures were entered into a bivariate correlation with figures measuring the percentage change in turnout for each election to investigate the direction and significance of their correlations. If the results are to indicate a similar relationship to Wood and Norton's (1992) research a negative and significant relationship is expected which indicates that as length of tenure increases, turnout figures decrease.

Table 6.2: Correlations between tenure and turnout change

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Seat tenure	-.054	.049	-.125**	-.031	-.100*	-.091*
Career tenure	-.077	.055	.016	.042	-.104**	-.015

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results in table 6.2 for the two continuous measures of tenure offer little support for the expected decline in turnout as tenure increases. Looking firstly at the results for seat tenure, the results for all years except 1992 are negative and therefore in the expected direction. However, the correlations are significant, albeit weakly, in 1997, 2005 and 2010. A likely explanation is that these significant results are an effect of boundary changes prior to each of these elections (UK-wide for 1997, Scottish constituencies for 2005, English and Welsh constituencies for 2010). The seat tenure measure is only able to record the incumbent's occupation of that particular permutation of boundaries, so any boundary change wipes out the ability to account for longer tenures in predecessor seats. The results of the correlations between turnout and the career tenure variable, which accounts for tenure beyond boundary changes by using historical career biographies (see chapter three), are less promising, with only two negative correlations and a single significant result in 2005. The correlations are still weak, but this is only a bivariate correlation, and does not control for other factors which may boost the values of tenure.

Finally, the binary variable indicating first-term incumbents was entered into an independent samples t-test for each election to examine whether the figures for average change in turnout varied significantly according to whether the incumbent was a first-term MP or not. A negative t-test statistic indicates that the mean turnout figures for first-term MPs are higher than other incumbents. The results, shown in table 6.3, show partial support for this proposed

relationship, with negative t-test statistics for half of the elections (1987, 2001 and 2005), but only the result for 1987 is significant and in the expected direction.

Table 6.3: T-Test between turnout change and first-term incumbents

	First-Term	Other incumbents	T	df
1987	3.24 (2.94)	2.67 (2.26)	-2.194*	219.745
1992	1.58 (3.39)	2.34 (3.65)	2.219*	629
1997	-6.47 (2.57)	-5.80 (2.65)	2.576**	638
2001	-12.40 (2.57)	-12.42 (2.43)	-.089	471
2005	2.20 (3.51)	2.05 (3.47)	-.370	625
2010	3.94 (2.97)	4.35 (3.17)	1.260	625

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The 2005 result is the largest in the expected direction of the period, with mean turnout change for first-term MPs being on average 0.15 percentage points higher than in other constituencies. However, in both 1992 and 1997, constituencies with first-term incumbents had significantly *lower* turnouts than other types of constituency. One possible explanation is the nature of the first-term variable itself. It records an incumbent *defending* their first election, so the incumbent would actually have been elected in the preceding election (or by-election). It may be that there were simply fewer first-term incumbents in 1992 (elected in 1987) and 1997 (elected in 1992). Exploring the percentage of seats that changed hands at each election, 1987 and 1992 did indeed see fewer seats change hands than at any other elections during the period except 2001. Overall, the results indicate that there is little relationship between change in turnout and length of tenure

Constituency socio-demographics and turnout

The first in-depth examination of socio-demographic variables and their relationship with turnout in the UK was conducted by Crewe and Payne (1971) at the 1970 general election, with socio-demographics offering a context within which voting decisions can be influenced (Pattie and Johnston, 2000). There are three main groups of constituency socio-demographic characteristics operating on a contextual level with turnout; age, education and integration, with evidence from both the individual and aggregate levels.

The conventional view of the individual-level relationship between age and voter turnout is a curvilinear relationship. The youngest and oldest voters are least likely to vote, while middle-aged voters are most likely to vote (Bhatti, Hansen, and Wass, 2012). However, in the UK, there is evidence from existing research that older voters are the group most likely to vote, findings which are in contrast to Milbrath (1965:135). Age has been found to have a significant impact on voter turnout in the UK, with Crewe (1981) drawing the linking age and likelihood of voting in the UK, with older voters particularly more likely to vote than younger voters.

At the aggregate level, there is no single variable available for all census returns across the period allowing the identification of all age group proportions; instead proxies need to be utilised. A variable which identifies one age group in a constituency population is that identifying the proportion of under 18s, but this does not work as it is not available for all years, and also does not sit well in a study of turnout, as under 18s are unable to vote. At the other end of the scale, there is a potential proxy variable available for all elections which enables the identification of constituencies with higher percentages of older people: the proportion of the population of retirement age, with Crewe and Payne (1971) clearly identifying higher proportions of retired people with high turnouts. Drawing on this existing evidence, constituencies with higher levels of older voters would be expected to have higher turnouts. This is supported by Clarke et al.'s findings (2004:342) which indicated that it was voters aged 66 and over (i.e. over retirement age) who were most likely to vote in 2001.

The existing literature also examines the relationship between education and voting, finding that constituencies with higher populations of those with further education are typically associated with higher turnouts. Even in the earliest individual-level studies of voter behaviour, Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944:42) drew the link, describing education as 'a direct creator of interest' in politics, echoed also by Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee's belief in the link between political interest and the education (1954:25). Less directly, Nie, Verba and Petrocik (1976:6) saw education being 'the driving force in the development of citizenship qualities' in that it creates a sense of civic responsibility in the individual, one manifestation of which is the desire to engage actively with society by voting. Education therefore not only enables an individual to understand societal expectations regarding voting, but also to be able to understand politics.

In aggregate studies, education has been observed to have a 'very substantial' effect (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980:34), with the better educated being more likely to vote. This is attributed to theories of rational choice and the balance between costs and benefits in

the decision to vote, with education lowering the cost of voting to the individual and increasing the capacity to understand politics. Ideally, to examine whether constituencies with higher proportions of highly educated individuals have higher turnouts, variables in the census data measuring the highest level of education attained by the constituency population would be available, but there are no such variables available for all years. Instead proxies need to be identified that would enable the examination of the link between higher levels of education and higher levels of turnout. One potential proxy would be to measure the proportion of those employed in particular occupations; occupations which typically require a varying level of education. Two occupational variables at the two extremes of the spectrum have been selected here; those employed in professional occupations and those employed in routine jobs. This is not a perfect measure, but constituencies with a higher proportion of people in professional occupations would be expected to have higher turnouts than constituencies with higher levels of routine workers, echoing the findings of Crewe and Payne (1971).

Putnam (1966) explores the links between socio-demographics and turnout by examining the role of social integration; those constituencies with higher proportions of integrated voters will have higher levels of turnout. When a constituency population has integrated into the local area, as Putnam hypothesises, turnout increases as the population will desire to play an active role in the community. To explore the link between integration and turnout, variables measuring elements of integration need to be identified. Drawing on existing literature, two have been identified: the proportion of owner occupiers in a constituency and the level of migration. There is a range of empirical evidence which supports the link between owner occupiers and turnout (Denver and Hands, 1974; Crewe and Payne, 1971). Lutz (1991:722) finds that higher levels of both owner occupiers and professionals were related to higher levels of turnout; this is also supported by the findings of Crewe, Särlvik and Alt (1977) in their study of turnout in the UK, who considered home ownership and residential mobility the two most important indicators of turnout, alongside age. The relationship between migration and turnout is a little more complex, with Denver and Halfacree (1992) finding contrasting results in their aggregate study for in-migrants and out-migrants; while the former had little impact on turnout, the latter had an independent effect even when controlling for other variables.

To explore the types of constituencies that have higher and lower levels of turnout, five variables were selected based on the research discussed above, including measures of the retired population, the proportion of professionals, the percentage of routine workers, the

migrant population and the percentage of owner occupiers. However, it is likely that many of these variables are closely related which brings in issues of collinearity; to ascertain this, all five socio-demographic variables were examined in a correlation matrix, seen in table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Bivariate correlations between constituency socio-demographic variables

	Owner	Retired	Professional	Routine	Migrants
Owner		-.191**	-.049**	.148**	-.224**
Retired	-.191**		.562**	.385**	-.126**
Professional	-.049**	.562**		.511**	.123**
Routine	.148**	.385**	.511**		-.128**
Migrants	-.224**	-.126**	.123**	-.128**	

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The proportion of professionals was significantly negatively correlated with the proportion of both retired people and routine workers to a high degree, so the former was removed from analysis. This left four variables as potential control variables: the number of owner occupiers in a constituency, the percentage of the population which is retired, the proportion of routine workers and the percentage of migrants. Initial bivariate correlations were run between these variables and turnout, with the results shown in table 6.4.

Table 6.5: Bivariate correlations between constituency socio-demographics and turnout

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Owner	.263**	.544**	.754**	.409**	.501**	.654**
Retired	-.320**	-.107*	.186**	.360**	.282**	.280**
Routine	-.186**	-.166**	-.609**	-.184**	-.273**	-.493**
Migrants	-.080	-.218**	-.183**	-.246**	-.097*	-.187**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

It was expected that constituencies in which there are higher proportions of retired people to be correlated positively with turnout, as evidence has drawn a link between constituencies with higher proportions of older age groups and higher levels of turnout. However, in both 1987 and 1992, the correlations are negative and significant indicating that constituencies

with higher proportions of retired people were associated with lower turnout figures for these elections. The remaining four elections of the period offer clearer support for existing evidence by also showing a significant positive correlation between the two variables. The strongest (although only moderate) result is in 2001.

Following Putnam's expectations regarding community integration, a positive relationship between constituencies with higher percentages of owner occupiers and turnout is expected, as owner occupiers have actively invested in the local community (by buying property), making this population less mobile than tenants. The results in table 6.5 offer support for this, with constituencies with higher populations of owner occupiers significantly correlated with higher turnout at each election over the period. While the correlation between the two variables in 1987 is weak, all other years have correlations ranging from .409 in 2001 to .754 in 1997.

In terms of the occupational proxy for education level of a constituency's population, for the proportion of routine workers in a constituency, the results are also as expected, with constituencies with higher proportions of such workers associated negatively and significantly with turnout at all elections. The strength of these correlations varies across the election years, but is strongest in 1997 at .609. For migrants, the correlations were as expected negative, but they are also weak, particularly in 2005, and insignificant in 1987.

Campaigning and Turnout

Although fewer in number than studies of the effect of campaigning on vote share, the relationship between campaigning and turnout has been explored by existing research from the UK and the USA, providing empirical evidence in support of the relationship. From experimental studies (Bochel and Denver, 1971; Gerber and Green, 2000) to aggregate-level investigations (Cox and Munger, 1989; Denver et al., 2004) using a range of campaigning measures, repeated evidence has found a generally positive relationship between higher levels of campaigning and higher voter turnout. Fisher and Denver (2009), for example, contrasted the effect of traditional and modern types of campaigning on turnout between 1992 and 2005, discovering that in three of the four elections, traditional methods of campaigning had a positive effect on turnout. It may be that the UK context enhances the ability of campaigning to affect turnout (Whiteley and Seyd, 1994), with stronger

partisanship than the USA as well as advertising laws raising voter contact and the short campaign period.

Initial bivariate correlations were conducted between turnout figures and aggregate figures of the three measures of campaigning (shown in table 6.6). Following existing research, significant and positive correlations are expected between the two variables, indicating that higher levels of campaigning are associated with higher levels of turnout. This initial testing is vital as it provides justification for examining this relationship at a more detailed level later in the chapter. Examining the results of these correlations, there are indications that higher levels of turnout are associated with higher levels of campaigning for all three campaigning variables.

Table 6.6: Bivariate correlations between campaigning variables and turnout

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Spending	.438**	.171**	.150**	.456**	.489**	.382**	.252**
Doorstep	.358**		.075	.326**	.293**		
Telephone	.279**			.019	.202**		

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

All correlations are in the expected direction over the period as a whole, showing both positive and significant correlations with the turnout figures. Of the three measures of campaigning, the strongest (albeit moderate) correlation is for aggregate levels of spending (.362), followed by doorstep canvassing (.358). Telephone canvassing shows a positive but weak result at .279, which indicates initial support for Fisher and Denver's (2009) findings that modern methods of campaigning (such as telephone canvassing) were less effective in boosting turnout than traditional methods (including doorstep canvassing). Considering the correlations separately for each election enables variations in their strength to be observed. For campaign spending, the correlations for each individual election year are positive and significant. However, the results are weak for the first two elections in the period. 1997 saw the widespread adoption of strategic constituency campaigning in the UK, and it is interesting that it is at this election where there is a considerable jump in the strength of the correlations, firstly to .456, then to .624 in 2001. The correlations fall a little in strength, dropping back to .252 in 2010. Doorstep canvassing has positive correlations with turnout at all three elections, but this was only significant at .326 in 1997 (moderate) and .293 in 2001.

For the two elections at which data on telephone canvassing were collected, only the result for 2001 (.202) is significant, although both values are (just) positive, indicating that in some elections higher levels of telephone canvassing are associated with higher levels of turnout.

Creating the model

The correlations indicate promising results for the effectiveness of campaigning, but they only represent a simple analysis of the two variables, without taking other factors into consideration. To produce a more accurate account of the impact that campaigning has on turnout, a multivariate model controlling for other variables affecting turnout variations has been constructed. To examine the chapter hypothesis that *low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on turnout in safe constituencies*, two set of regressions using an identical model will be conducted; the first using continuous measures of campaigning, and the second using the binary identification of low level campaigning developed at the end of the last chapter. The model developed to examine this hypothesis incorporates a series of both political and social controls to offer a comprehensive account of changes in turnout.

There are other factors outside the remit of this study which can also affect turnout; in particular macro-institutional factors such as voting legislation and differing electoral systems. In many cases this impact can be considerable, with Powell (1986) estimating that such factors reduced turnout in American elections by up to 13 percentage points. Voting laws have a considerable impact on turnout, particularly when compulsory voting is in force in countries such as Australia and Belgium. Naturally, countries with such voting have considerably higher levels of turnout than countries where voting is optional (Jackman, 1986; Blais and Carty, 1990), although Blais (2006) concludes that compulsory voting is only effective in increasing turnout when sanctions are present. Turnout is also affected by the electoral system, with Blais and Carty (1990) demonstrating that proportional representation systems encourage higher turnout figures as they provide more options for voters, are fairer and are more competitive; turnout in such systems is on average (Blais and Dobrzynska, 1998:251) three percentage points higher than in other systems. However, as the present study is entirely based on UK constituency campaigning at the national level, which used FPTP over the entire period, these factors do not come under its remit.

Drawing on the analysis of variables affecting turnout so far, a model was developed by adding control variables in stages and examining their effect. The final model adopted

includes eight controls measuring both local political context and constituency demographics (the step-by-step creation of the model and application to aggregate spending and turnout is detailed in table 6.7, with model six selected as the final model).

Table 6.7: Creating a model testing the effect of campaigning on turnout 1987-2010

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Marginality	-.169** (.011)	-.054** (.012)	-.059** (.012)	-.346** (.033)	-.250** (028)	-.174** (.021)
Aggregate spending		.190** (.009)	.190** (.009)	.071** (.015)	.042** (.013)	-.014 (.010)
Career tenure			.046** (.017)	.033 (.017)	.005 (.015)	.007 (.011)
Marginality/spend interaction				.005** (.001)	.003** (.000)	.002** (.000)
Owner Occupiers					-.081** (.006)	-.080** (.005)
Retired					.144** (.014)	-.041** (.011)
Routine					-.886** (.032)	-.217** (.027)
Migrants					-.111** (.030)	.090** (.023)
Previous turnout						.606** (.012)
Adjusted r^2	.069	.192	.194	.217	.432	.686

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The first control variable entered into the model is marginality. Chapter four demonstrated that marginal constituencies see significantly higher turnout than safe constituencies. The inclusion of this control marks a departure from existing studies into the effectiveness of local campaign effectiveness, which typically do not control for marginality, arguing that the measure of campaigning is 'strongly related' (Denver et al., 2004:293) to marginality. As explored in the last chapter, this is often true, but not always. The model trialled here incorporates both marginality and measures of campaigning into the multivariate model to determine whether each exerts an independent effect. It is clear from the table that, even with

the gradual addition of other controls, marginality remains an important explanatory factor in turnout, maintaining an independent effect throughout. Even when entered by itself, it explains 6.9 percent of variation in turnout. Extending this, the effect of campaigning upon turnout is likely to vary according to constituency marginality, so to counter this an interaction term between the two variables was also entered into the model and found to boost the explanatory power.

The exploration of the association between tenure and turnout earlier in this chapter indicated some significant associations with turnout. All three tenure measures were trialled when creating the final model, but career tenure offered the greatest explanatory power, although its significance was negated when the interaction between marginality and spending was included. Denver et al. (2002:86) also include a measure of tenure in their model, although an indicator of first-term MPs was used instead.

Four demographics controls were also included, informed by the results of the bivariate correlations with turnout conducted earlier in this chapter: the proportions of owner occupiers, retired people, routine workers and migrants. The results of these correlations indicated that constituencies with different demographic profiles have different levels of turnout.

The final control entered into the model is a measure of previous turnout. By including this variable the nature of the model is altered; instead of examining turnout as a static concept, the model is able to account for the change in turnout at the election caused by campaigning. This enables the examination of a hypothesised decline in turnout in constituencies where campaigning is at a low level. To examine how closely linked turnout before and after an election are, bivariate correlations were carried out between the two variables at each election over the period. As expected, they were very strongly and significantly correlated at .717. The inclusion of previous measures of turnout are a relatively recent development in the modelling of constituency campaign effectiveness, with Fisher and Denver (2009) using a particularly parsimonious model for their study controlling only for previous turnout. Denver at al. (2004), in another major longitudinal study of constituency campaign effectiveness, when modelling the effectiveness of campaigning on turnout also included a historic measure of turnout. Despite Denver et al.'s (2004:295) argument that 'there are no estimates of what 1992 turnout would have been in the new 1997 constituencies', notional previous turnout figures have been created (Rallings and Thrasher, 1995; Norris, 2009) for each boundary revision over the period. Using such a stringent control boosted the explanatory power of the model during trials, but also depressed the results for the effects of

campaigning; any results which remain significant are promising. Interestingly, once previous turnout is controlled for, the coefficients for the retired population and migrants change direction. It is likely that this is previous turnout controlling for other unexplained variations in the resulting turnout figures. One of the key arguments for controlling for previous measures of the dependent variable (here turnout) is that they also control effectively for constituency socio-demographics. When trialling the model, the stage which controlled for both demographics and previous turnout offered the best explanatory value, so both sets of variables have been retained.

Models two to five show positive coefficients between aggregate spending and turnout. These results are as expected: spending increases turnout. However, the coefficient for aggregate spending in model six is negative and insignificant. This could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, as stated above, the addition of previous turnout into the model has dampened the impact of spending. Secondly, the aggregate nature of the spending variable may also affect this; it might be concealing the disproportionate spending between parties observed in the previous chapter. To explore this, regressions will also be run examining the effect of individual party spend. Finally, this model covers data from all elections between 1987 and 2010, so may conceal significant results for aggregate spending in particular election years.

For each model which includes an interaction term between marginality and spending, marginality has an impact on the relationship between spending and turnout. In model four, the safer the constituency, the lower the average spend, with ultra-safe constituencies seeing the lowest of all. Interestingly, for this model, the impact of spending upon turnout is greater the safer the constituency. In model 5, once constituency socio-demographics are factored in, marginality has a less marked impact. However, where the average spent is 45% or less of the total legal maximum, there is a drop in spending the safer they become. In the final model, spending has a greater impact on turnout the safer the constituency. Yet, as the previous chapter has indicated, it is these constituencies where spending is at its lowest.

The model was rerun for each election. Initially aggregate measures of all three campaigning variables were entered into a single regression model, but this encountered significant problems with multicollinearity. Instead, three sets of regression were conducted; one for each of the campaigning variables. The results for the final model testing the effect of aggregate spending on turnout can be seen in table 6.8.

Table 6.8: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between aggregate spending and turnout

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	-.069**	.025	.096**	-.036*	-.090**	-.010
	(.012)	(.020)	(.023)	(.015)	(.019)	(.012)
Aggregate spending	-.031**	.029**	.067**	.024*	.014	.019**
	(.008)	(.010)	(.008)	(.012)	(.010)	(.006)
Career tenure	-.099**	-.011	-.034	.036	-.051	-.016
	(.014)	(.039)	(.021)	(.032)	(.035)	(.020)
Marginality/spend interaction	.003**	.000	.001	.000	.001	-.001
	(.000)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
Owner Occupiers	-.002	.207**	.052**	.001	.054**	.071**
	(.009)	(.024)	(.014)	(.023)	(.019)	(.013)
Retired	-.378	-.056**	.044	.155**	.034	-.164**
	(.221)	(.015)	(.028)	(.042)	(.045)	(.041)
Routine	.001	.039	-.383**	-.050	-.150*	-.438**
	(.066)	(.033)	(.080)	(.049)	(.066)	(.037)
Migrants	.019	.028	-.093	.037	.097	-.160**
	(.025)	(.032)	(.050)	(.062)	(.088)	(.036)
Previous turnout	.822**	.743**	.736**	.888**	.691**	.618**
	(.026)	(.038)	(.028)	(.047)	(.029)	(.022)
Adjusted r^2	.748	.622	.858	.858	.764	.851

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The explanatory power of each of the models is good, with between 62.8 percent and 85.8 percent of variation in turnout change accounted at individual elections between 1987 and 2010. Aggregate levels of spending are positively related to turnout change at each of the elections from 1992 onwards, and of these positive results, all but 2005 are significant, holding all else constant. The insignificant result for 2005 could be linked to the drop in turnout in 2001 as indicated in graph 6.1; it may be that as turnout levels normalised after the historic low in 2001, there was a natural rise in turnout. When comparing the coefficients for average spending and marginality, there is no consistent pattern. For example in 2001 and 2010, spending had a greater effect on turnout than marginality did. The lack of consistency between these two variables also offers support for including both in the final model. The significant coefficients for spending reveal that although aggregate levels do affect turnout

change, the impact is very small; in 1997, for example, a one percentage point increase in aggregate spending leads to an increase of .096 percentage points in turnout. The size of these results is likely to be attributable to the model being particularly stringent, depressing the results for the campaigning variables.

The interaction terms between marginality and average spending show little of interest over the period, particularly in 1987 and 1992 when there was little consistent variation in the relationship between spending and turnout according to marginality. However, in 1997 the results indicate that as constituencies become safer, average spending has a greater, more positive impact upon turnout. Yet in the subsequent elections the interaction has little impact, only demonstrating that as seats become safer average spending falls considerably. The analysis in table 6.7 indicated that average spending had a negative impact across the period as a whole, which is not supported in five of the six elections in the year by year breakdown in table 6.8. It is likely that the changing interactions between marginality and spending was concealed by the overall figure.

The model was then run using aggregate levels of the two canvassing variables as the independent variables. For doorstep canvassing, the explanatory power of the model was once again good, with at least 73.3 percent of variation in turnout change explained at each of the three elections. At all three elections, higher levels of doorstep canvassing increased turnout, although this was only significant in 1992 when a single percentage point rise in the constituency covered by such canvassing led to a rise of .098 percentage points in turnout. In 1992, there was little evidence of an interaction between marginality and average levels of doorstep canvassing, with a pretty flat relationship between doorstep canvassing and turnout anyway. However, in 1997, the results indicated that the safer the constituency, the greater the boost from doorstep canvassing upon turnout, which is indicative of the increased targeting of resources at this election. The picture in 2001 is a little more complicated, with marginal constituencies (those with a previous majority of 9.99 percentage points and below) seeing a negative impact of higher levels of doorstep canvassing upon turnout. In contrast, although levels of doorstep canvassing declined in constituencies with higher previous majorities, the impact of doorstep canvassing upon turnout was positive.

Table 6.9: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between aggregate canvassing and turnout

	1992	1997	2001
Doorstep canvassing			
Marginality	.146 (.075)	-.018 (.024)	.019 (.055)
% doorstep canvassing	.098* (.046)	.011 (.025)	.043 (.059)
Career tenure	.060 (.042)	-.012 (.022)	.050 (.053)
Marginality/spend interaction	-.004 (.002)	.000 (.001)	-.002 (.002)
Owner Occupiers	.263** (.065)	.061* (.029)	-.018 (.049)
Retired	.071 (.067)	.062 (.054)	.336** (.112)
Routine	-.325 (.244)	-.456** (.159)	-.104 (.178)
Migrants	.042 (.034)	.185 (.103)	.049 (2.73)
Previous turnout	.580** (.078)	.729** (.057)	.783** (.109)
Adjusted r^2	.733	.822	.758
Telephone canvassing			
Marginality		.258 (.208)	-.030(.036)
% telephone canvassing		.204 (.164)	.036 (.077)
Career tenure		-.123 (.110)	.024 (.056)
Marginality/spend interaction		-.014 (.013)	-.005 (.005)
Owner Occupiers		-.061 (.126)	-.014 (.046)
Retired		.016 (.207)	.462** (.138)
Routine		-.157 (1.046)	.033 (.275)
Migrants		.578 (.370)	.285 (.307)
Previous turnout		.954* (.240)	.712** (.097)
Adjusted r^2		.759	.797

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N =1911
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Both coefficients for telephone canvassing are also in the expected direction, indicating that it raised turnout, although not significantly. The interaction terms between marginality and telephone canvassing is particularly interesting in 1997. What is clear from this election is the concentration of such targeting upon marginal seats, with high levels of telephone canvassing concentrated in constituencies with previous majorities of 14.99 percentage points and below. In seats with previous majorities of between and 9.99 percentage points, as the level of overall telephone canvassing rises, so does turnout. However, this is not borne out by constituencies with other previous majorities, where the interaction indicates that the more telephone canvassing, the lower the turnout.

The individual relationships between campaigning by the three parties and turnout are worth investigating as it may be that in certain election years, campaigning by one party is more effective in boosting turnout than others. Table 6.10 shows the results for the regressions examining whether party-specific campaigning increases turnout. By entering all parties into the same regression the model isolates the impact of spending by individual parties. The models explain a good degree of variation in turnout for every election year, ranging from 65.2% in 1992 to 95.1% over the entire period as a whole.

Over the 1987 to 2010 period as a whole, spending by both the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives significantly boosts turnout. Liberal Democrat spending had the greater effect, with a single percentage point increase in the party's spending increasing turnout by .022 percentage points. For Labour, spending by the party actually decreases turnout insignificantly. Yet these cross-period results conceal fluctuations in the relationship between party spending and turnout at individual elections. Labour, starting the period as the opposition before winning a landslide in 1997 and losing in 2010, have been through a variety of different contexts. To consider their spending as a whole across the period is likely to underplay the effectiveness of their spending in increasing turnout.

Table 6.10: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between party-specific spending and turnout

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.017 (.021)	.180** (.022)	-.174** (.044)	.136** (.027)	.035 (.030)	-.068* (.034)	.031 (.022)
Conservative spending	.019** (.007)	.022 (.013)	.008 (.013)	.037** (.009)	.016 (.012)	.014 (.012)	.009 (.006)
Labour spending	-.004 (.005)	.010 (.011)	-.038** (.011)	.045** (.009)	.001 (.009)	-.009 (.009)	.012* (.005)
Liberal Democrat spending	.022** (.005)	.003 (.009)	-.006 (.009)	.025** (.006)	.022* (.009)	.003 (.009)	.015** (.005)
Career tenure	.003 (.010)	-.032* (.014)	-.009 (.018)	.004 (.010)	.022 (.021)	-.048** (.017)	-.012 (.010)
Marginality and Conservative spend interaction	.000 (.000)	-.002** (.001)	.000 (.000)	-.001 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Marginality and Labour spend interaction	.002** (.000)	-.001 (.000)	.000 (.000)	-.001** (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	-.001** (.000)
Marginality and Liberal Democrat spend interaction	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.001 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Owner Occupiers	-.096** (.005)	-.003 (.009)	-.057** (.014)	.054** (.014)	.001 (.017)	.057** (.019)	.060** (.013)
Retired	-.051** (.001)	-.428 (.226)	.063* (.032)	.048 (.029)	.174** (.049)	-.006 (.045)	-.182** (.041)
Routine	-.185** (.026)	.032 (.069)	.006 (.031)	-.401** (.085)	-.082 (.057)	-.136* (.066)	-.414** (.038)
Migrants	.049* (.022)	.026 (.026)	.725** (.037)	-.087 (.052)	.058 (.079)	.063 (.086)	-.194** (.037)
Previous turnout	.593** (.012)	.830** (.028)	.725** (.037)	.722** (.029)	.905** (.040)	.674** (.031)	.607** (.023)
Adjusted r^2	.951	.736	.652	.859	.862	.777	.857

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Conservative candidate spending, controlling for spending by the other parties, is positively related to turnout in each of the elections. However, the coefficient for 1997 is the only one which is significant, indicating that a single percentage point rise in spending by Conservative candidates saw an increase in turnout of .037 percentage points. The impact of marginality upon the relationship between spending and turnout was minimal, although between 1987 and 1997 differences were observable at the extremes where the safer a constituency was, both the party spend and turnout were lower. In 2001 and 2005, there was a move from Conservative candidates towards more strategic patterns of spending, with constituency marginality having a clear impact upon the relationship between spending and turnout. The safer the constituency was, the more positive the impact of spending by the Conservatives upon turnout.

Evidence that Labour campaign spending is related to turnout is also mixed, with the coefficients for spending negative in 1992 and 2005 but only significant in the former. This is in contrast to the other four elections, all of which saw positive coefficients between Labour spending and turnout. In both 1997 and 2010 such spending made a significant difference to turnout figures, even when controlling for spending by other parties. The biggest payoff in terms of turnout boost by Labour candidate spending was in 1997 when a percentage point increase in candidate spending increased turnout by .045 percentage points. Comparing these results to the coefficients for Conservative spending, it would seem that the effect of Labour spending on turnout is more erratic than spending by the Conservatives. Looking at the impact that marginality has upon the relationship between spending by Labour candidates and turnout in constituencies, the biggest differences can be seen at the two extremes. In constituencies where the previous majority was below 20 percentage points, spending of between 42 and 89 percent of the legal maximum had no impact upon turnout. However, where spending was above or below these figures, marginality did have an impact. Here, the safer the constituency, the lesser the positive impact of Labour spending upon turnout, with the most positive results in ultra-marginal seats. There is also a negative impact for higher levels of spending on turnout in ultra-safe constituencies, which is echoed throughout the period under study.

The values for the Liberal Democrats in individual election years are positive for all except 1992, when it is just negative. All other years saw a positive relationship between Liberal Democrat spending and turnout, although the relationship was only significant in 1997 and 2010. The safer a constituency was, the greater the positive impact of spending by Liberal

Democrat candidates upon turnout. However, as the smallest of the three parties, the Liberal Democrats have run more consistently strategic campaigns focusing their resources upon more marginal seats. This appears to be a feature of Liberal Democrats spending particularly from 1997 onwards, with very sharp falls in spending in ultra-safe constituencies. Therefore although Liberal Democrat spending is effective in increasing turnout, it is not focused where it could have the greatest impact upon turnout.

The results are mixed when examining the effectiveness of doorstep canvassing in boosting turnout, controlling for canvassing by other parties, (results in appendix 9). For both the Conservatives and Labour, none of the coefficients are significant, although all are positive except for Conservative doorstep canvassing in 1997. Doorstep canvassing by the Liberal Democrats significantly boosted turnout in both 1992 and 1997 by .101 and .060 percentage points respectively for every percentage point increase in coverage of the constituency. Telephone canvassing only boosted turnout when it was conducted by the Conservatives in 2001, with a .070 boost in turnout for every percentage increase in the constituency covered by telephone canvassing. However, none of the remaining coefficients are significant, and they are negative for the Conservative in 1997 and for both Labour and the Liberal Democrats in 2001, despite the models once again accounting for a good degree of variation in the dependent variable at between 84.7 and 92.7% of variation in turnout explained. There were no significant interactions, and examining the impact of marginality upon the relationship between the canvassing measures and turnout showed little of interest. However, the safer the constituency, the more positive the impact of Conservative doorstep canvassing in 1997 upon turnout, and a considerable difference in both spending and turnout could be observed for the Liberal Democrats in ultra-safe constituencies in 2001. The impact of telephone canvassing conducted by Labour in 1997 on turnout was affected by constituency marginality, with ultra-safe constituencies seeing a decline in turnout as the proportion of the constituency canvassed via telephone increased. This was in contrast to ultra-marginal constituencies, where higher levels of telephone canvassing boosted turnout.

These results demonstrate that campaign spending has an impact on turnout, with mostly positive and significant values for all three parties even when controlling for spending by others. The results for the two campaign activity variables are more mixed. Of the two measures, doorstep canvassing would appear to be more effective in boosting turnout than telephone canvassing, with a greater number of positive and significant results. This is line with both the findings of Gerber and Green's experimental study (2000) and Fisher and

Denver's (2009) comparison of the effectiveness of traditional methods (which includes doorstep canvassing) and modern methods (telephone canvassing) in boosting turnout. This may be, as Gerber and Green suggest, down to the more personal nature of doorstep canvassing.

Low levels of campaigning and the impact on turnout

The regressions above have testing the relationship between campaign neglect and turnout implicitly (by considering the positive impact that campaigning may have on turnout). The findings indicate a relationship between campaigning and turnout which suggests that in many cases, when parties spend more, turnout is boosted. This section extends this by explicitly examining whether low level campaigns depress turnout. Denver et al. (2004) suggest support for the hypothesis that campaign neglect has a detrimental impact upon turnout, with weak campaigns (those in the first quartile, equivalent to low level campaigns) reducing turnout by up to 4.6 percentage points in 2001. To test this, the model constructed in the previous section has been maintained for consistency and comparability, but now includes as the independent variable the binary variable indicating the combined levels of campaigning for the top two parties in a constituency, as constructed in the last chapter.

Table 6.11 shows a summary of the unstandardized coefficients for each combination with low level campaign spending. If the hypothesis that campaign neglect depresses turnout is supported, negative values in those constituencies would be expected particularly where both parties run low level campaigns (in the first quartile). However of the 42 scenarios over the six election years, only 24 are in the expected direction.

Table 6.11: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout (full results in Appendix 10)

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
1:1	-.688 (1.259)	1.064 (1.158)	-2.773* (1.091)	-.271 (1.356)	.059 (1.269)	.483 (.831)
1:2	-.517 (1.014)	-.586 (1.389)	-3.675** (.995)	-1.594 (1.265)	1.016 (1.362)	.501 (.770)
1:3	-.104 (1.590)	3.456** (1.139)	.308 (.862)	.146 (1.232)	-1.224 (2.009)	-.320 (.932)
1:4	-1.023 (1.654)	-.590 (1.270)	.323 (1.052)	3.422 (1.888)	-10.145** (1.613)	-3.376* (1.026)
2:1	-4.168* (1.967)	2.610 (1.347)	-1.427 (1.007)	.939 (1.267)	1.296 (1.860)	.280 (1.041)
3:1	-.385 (1.184)	1.021 (1.401)	.166 (1.469)	-.794 (1.998)	.772 (1.594)	-1.706 (.985)
4:1	-2.271 (1.330)	-1.565 (1.622)	.909 (1.392)	-1.952 (1.558)	-.169 (2.029)	-1.098 (1.545)

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The model explains a good degree of variation (between 62% and 86%) in turnout for all years. Focusing firstly on constituencies with low level spending campaigns run by both incumbents and opposition (1:1), there is some support for the hypothesis that low level campaigns reduce turnout, although the results are not as decisive as expected. Of the six elections covered, the relationship is indeed negative for three out of the six elections. In 1992, 2005 and 2010, however, the value is positive. Only one of the negative coefficients is significant, with low level campaigns in 1997 depressing turnout. In this year, when the top two parties in a constituency ran low level spending campaigns, turnout was reduced by 2.77 percentage points when compared to other levels of campaign spending. Looking at the impact of marginality on the relationship between such campaigns and turnout offers some interesting results. For those constituencies where 1:1 campaigns were run, marginality had a clear impact upon turnout from 2001 onwards, with considerably lower turnout in ultra-safe constituencies. Interestingly, these campaigns had a negative impact on turnout in the safest constituencies from 1997 onwards, particularly where the previous majority was at least 15 percentage points and above.

This table also reveals whether low level campaigns run by opposition parties have a greater negative impact on turnout than those run by incumbents. For this to be supported, it is expected that those constituencies where the opposition party runs a low level spending campaign and the incumbent candidate runs a more intense campaign (i.e. 2:1, 3:1 and 4:1) there should be more significant results than those where the opposite is true (i.e. 1:2, 1:3 and 1:4). For those in which the opposition party ran low level campaigns (which fits with safe constituencies), of the eighteen scenarios, only ten are in the expected direction. In seats where 2:1 scenarios were run, there are only two negative coefficients, with a single significant result in 1987, when running such a campaign reduced turnout by 4.17 percentage points. The interactions for these scenarios indicate that from 2001 onwards marginality was key in altering levels of turnout, but it only had an impact on the relationship between 2:1 scenarios and turnout from 2005 onwards, when the safer the constituency was, the greater the negative impact of such campaigns on turnout, with the largest impact being in ultra-safe constituencies. There were no significant coefficients for 3:1 scenarios, and only half were in the expected direction. As before, in 2005 the negative impact of 3:1 campaigns increased the safer a constituency became, although constituency marginality was central in explaining levels of turnout from 2001 onwards. None of the coefficients were significant for seats in which 4:1 campaigns were run, although most were in the expected direction, indicating that these campaigns reduced turnout. In these scenarios, marginality was the key driver of change in turnout, with ultra-safe constituencies seeing clearly lower turnout figures than more marginal constituencies. However, marginality does appear to have had an impact on the relationship between 4:1 scenarios and turnout in 2005, with a more detrimental impact on turnout the safer the constituency.

For scenarios in which the incumbent party ran low level spending campaigns and the opponent party spent more intensely (1:2, 1:3, and 1:4) eleven of the eighteen scenarios are in the expected direction; one more than scenarios in which the opposition party were running low level spending campaigns and with three significant coefficients compared to one. Therefore, the idea that opposition low level campaigns were more harmful to turnout does not appear to be supported. In scenarios where the incumbent party ran a low level spending campaign and the opposition candidate spent in the second quartile, four coefficients of the six were negative. In 1997, in constituencies where the top two parties campaigned in this way, turnout was significantly reduced by 3.67 percentage points. When the opponent spent in the third quartile, only half of the coefficients were negative, compared

to four where opponents spent in the fourth quartile. In both 2005 and 2010 these 1:4 scenarios had a significant negative impact on turnout, reducing it by 10.14 and 3.38 percentage points respectively. The interactions reveal that the impact of marginality on the relationship between low level spending by incumbents and turnout is inconsistent. However, in 2005, no matter how highly the opposition candidate spent, low level spending campaigns by the incumbent had a negative impact on turnout, which increased as constituencies became safer.

Table 6.12: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout (full results in Appendix 11)

	Doorstep			*Telephone*	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
1:1	3.131	.027	.843	.728	.016
	(1.968)	(1.039)	(1.796)	(1.850)	(1.591)
1:2	-.879	-.817	-2.076	-9.158	N/A
	(1.556)	(1.465)	(2.144)	(21.130)	
1:3	.531	-2.802	-2.567	14.806**	-.817
	(2.475)	(1.533)	(2.700)	(5.113)	(2.091)
1:4	-1.827	-.171	-3.068	-1.986	1.926
	(4.243)	(1.101)	(1.745)	(4.249)	(1.881)
2:1	-4.857	1.907	.312	2.161	-2.897
	(7.066)	(1.259)	(2.131)	(2.427)	(3.129)
3:1	4.515	.055	-1.917	.485	-1.109
	(4.084)	(1.058)	(2.472)	(1.852)	(1.782)
4:1	-3.458	1.819	1.379	-1.843	3.367
	(6.392)	(2.147)	(5.513)	(1.699)	(2.155)

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. No constituencies in 2001 were found to have 1:2 telephone canvassing campaigns.*

The model was run for the two canvassing variables, but the results were very mixed with no significant values. For doorstep canvassing, low level campaigns run by both incumbent and opposition candidates were not negatively related to turnout. The interactions between marginality and the impact of such campaigns on turnout also offered mixed results. In 1997, such campaigns had a detrimental impact upon turnout but only in constituencies with majorities of 20 percentage points and above. However, in 2001 such campaigns had a positive impact on turnout in seats of the same majority. For constituencies where the incumbent candidates ran low levels of doorstep canvassing and the opposition candidates

canvassed more, the values were negative for 1:2. In 1997, the interaction indicates that the safer the constituency, the more detrimental running such campaigns was on constituency turnout. Where opposition candidates ran low levels of doorstep canvassing and the incumbent candidate canvassed harder, there were negative results only in the case of 3:1 scenarios. The interaction terms gave inconsistent results, although there were indications that in 1997, the safer the constituency the more negative the impact of running 2:1 doorstep canvassing campaigns on turnout was. The results for telephone canvassing are equally mixed, with no scenario offering negative coefficients for both years covered. The interactions did indicate that low level telephone canvassing campaigns run by both the incumbent and opponent (1:1) had a detrimental impact on turnout, but only when constituencies had previous majorities of 20 percentage points and above. These rather mixed results for both spending and canvassing indicate that there is no consistent evidence that low levels of campaigning have a negative impact on turnout.

Conclusion

Low level campaigns often have a detrimental impact on turnout, but this is inconsistent. In half of the election years low level campaign spending by the top two parties had a negative impact on turnout, although this was only found to be significant in 1997. When the levels of campaigning differed between incumbent and opposition, the results are interesting; low level campaigns by incumbent parties were more likely to be negatively related to turnout, although few of these relationships were significant. The interactions do indicate that the safer the constituency, the greater the negative impact of low level campaigns. While the results of the regressions have not been as definitive as expected, this may be due to the stringency of the model constructed, which underplays the impact of campaigning. Perhaps the reason that there are significantly fewer studies of constituency campaign effects on turnout in the UK indicates that the testing of this relationship is more complex.

Turnout declined dramatically at the 2001 general election and has not recovered, despite increasing at the two subsequent elections. This chapter has considered a range of reasons for turnout variations, from local tenure to constituency demographics, with the aim of exploring whether low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on constituency turnout. Campaigning affects turnout by providing information which lowers the cost of voting to the constituency population, and existing evidence has indicated that higher levels of

campaigning can increase turnout in many cases. As part of examining the effectiveness of campaigning (and the potentially detrimental impact of low levels of campaigning) a model was constructed, drawing on existing literature and the data used here. Control variables, the selection of which has been based on existing research, have also been entered into the model. The next chapter takes this model and applies it to consider the detrimental impact of low level campaigning on the second dimension of local electoral outcomes: party vote share.

Chapter 7

Low level campaigning and vote share: does absence make the heart grow fonder?

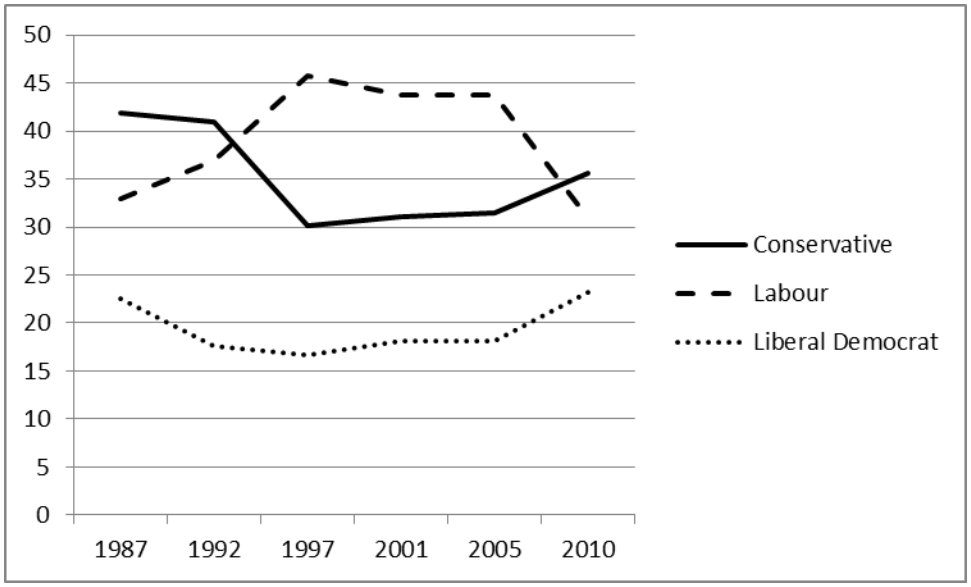
There is much existing evidence in the UK that when a party campaigns intensely in a constituency, there is a beneficial effect upon their local vote share, whether it is spending more (Johnston and Pattie, 2008) or canvassing harder. The third sub-hypothesis explored in this thesis is whether *low levels of campaigning have a detrimental impact on party vote share*. Intense campaigning has a largely positive impact on vote share, and this chapter extends this to consider whether a relative lack of campaigning might actually reduce vote share. Important variations in the relationship between campaigning and vote share are also considered, in particular local incumbency. This will be explored by examining whether *low level campaigns run by opposition parties have a greater negative impact on party vote share than those run by incumbents* and if *low levels of campaigning have a greater negative impact on vote share than on turnout*.

This chapter engages with vote share in some detail, exploring trends for the three main parties over the period. Drawing on existing literature, a range of variables with the potential to affect vote share, including tenure and demographics, are examined across the period. This analysis is conducted prior to examining the relationship between campaigning levels and vote share with a multivariate model largely based on that developed in the previous chapter. Maintaining the model offers both comparability between the chapters and a high level of explanatory power. The relationship between levels of campaigning and party vote share has been conducted in two stages; firstly by examining continuous measures of the campaigning variables used throughout this thesis and their impact on vote share changes. If intense campaigning is effective in boosting vote share, then by extension, a lack of campaigning in a constituency may have a harmful effect. However, these conclusions are only implicit in regards to this relationship, which needs to be measured explicitly in a second stage. By utilising the measure identifying low level campaigning as developed in chapter five, such an examination is possible. In many cases, a clear relationship can be observed between low levels of campaigning and a decrease in vote share, particularly for opposition candidates.

Patterns in vote share 1987-2010

Party vote share represents the votes received at the constituency level by each of the three parties studied here. Vote share is the determining factor behind marginality, as seen in chapter four, but the vote shares examined at this stage are those *resulting* from elections, although in many cases (where there have been no boundary changes) they form the marginality of a constituency at the following election. In safe constituencies where the locally incumbent party has a large majority, other parties will have smaller vote shares. As the smallest of the three parties, lower overall constituency vote shares are expected from the Liberal Democrats, who not only hold the smallest number of seats, but typically hold more marginal constituencies where the vote shares are more evenly split between parties. Labour should also have the higher overall local vote share of the three parties, as they have consistently held the safest of constituencies. It will be possible to clearly identify elections over the period at which there have been government changes, with an overall boost in vote shares for the nationally winning party (or parties in the case of 2010) and a decline in overall constituency vote share for the party losing national office. Larger standard deviations are also likely for the nationally winning parties, as to win the national incumbency parties will need to gain constituencies from other parties which may result in some smaller majorities. Graph 7.1 details the mean vote shares for the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats resulting from the six elections during the period.

Graph 7.1: Patterns in vote share 1987-2010



Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

There is a steep drop of over ten percentage points in the mean constituency vote shares for the Conservatives, from 40.97 in 1992 to just 30.19 in 1997, reflecting the Labour landslide. Over the following two elections Conservative vote shares recovered slightly, with slight increases of 0.85 and 0.39 points in 2001 and 2005 respectively. As expected, there was a boost in mean local Conservative vote shares in 2010 when they won enough seats to form a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats, but their average local vote share remains over five points lower than at the start of the period. The standard deviation figures (table 7.1), which indicate the variation around the mean, vary across the period for the Conservatives, with a steep decline from 14.06 in 1992 to 12.17 in 1997 indicating, along with the drop in the mean, that there was a lot less variation overall.

Table 7.1: Standard deviation figures for party vote share

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative	14.51	14.06	12.17	13.21	13.96	14.57
Labour	17.75	17.80	17.88	16.53	15.10	15.90
Lib Dem	8.97	10.06	10.89	10.94	10.37	10.45

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804

The standard deviations for 2010 are the highest of the entire period, with some Conservative candidates registering high vote shares and others very low. The lowest constituency vote share for the Conservatives was in 2001, when they gained just 2.8% of the vote share in Argyll and Bute; this is interesting as the lowest figures might have been expected in 1997 with the steep decline in the mean. The figures for the maximum vote share demonstrate that there have been some extremely safe Conservative constituencies during the period, with the Conservatives having a 66.44% share of the vote in Bexhill and Battle in 1987.

The patterns in vote share for Labour are almost a mirror image of those for the Conservatives, with a sharp increase in average Labour constituency vote share in 1997 and a steep drop in 2010. Mean Labour local vote share increased steadily by almost four percentage points between 1987 and 1992, but in 1997 saw a sharp rise of 8.91 percentage points; not as sharp a rise as the fall in Conservative vote share. This has steadily been eroded at the subsequent three elections, initially very slightly with drops of 2.03 and 0.10 points in 2001 and 2005 respectively, with a sharper drop of 12.68 percentage points in 2010, signifying the change of government; indeed, the result for 2010 is the lowest mean vote share for Labour over the entire period. The standard deviations of Labour vote shares remained fairly constant throughout the first three elections of the period at between 17.75 and 17.88; in contrast to the Conservatives who saw a reduction in their standard deviation in 1997, this year represents the highest figures for standard deviation for Labour of 17.88. The

subsequent decline in standard deviation indicates that there was a decreased amount of variation in Labour vote shares in constituencies during this period, due to a consolidation of the landslide victory in 1997 and the defensive electoral position in the elections that followed. It is interesting to compare these figures to the standard deviations for Conservative vote share which are consistently lower. Chapter four demonstrated that Labour have held the safest seat at each election over the period, indicating high vote shares. The figures certainly reflect this, with Labour having maximum vote shares at least nine percentage points higher than equivalent figures for the Conservatives; in 1997, whereas the maximum vote share for the latter was 55.3%, Labour's was 27.6 percentage points higher at 82.9%.

The graph also shows that the Liberal Democrats have the lowest average vote share, with the highest value of 23.18% in 2010 coinciding with the change in government resulting in their entry into the Coalition; this value also represents their closest mean vote share to the other two parties, just 12.47 and 7.82 percentage points behind the Conservatives and Labour respectively. In contrast to the peaks and troughs of the Conservatives and Labour vote shares over the period, the average vote shares for the Liberal Democrats have remained more constant. The mean vote shares for the party declined between 1987 and 1997, with the latter election recording the lowest average vote share for the period of just 16.68%. It would appear that Labour's victory in 1997 came not only at the expense of the Conservatives, but also the Liberal Democrats (Russell, Fieldhouse, 2005:158), which is perhaps unsurprising as tactical voting strategies between Labour and the Liberal Democrats used at this election could have depressed vote shares for the latter. At the last three elections of the period, there has been a slight recovery in vote share for the Liberal Democrats. The minimum vote shares for the party are lower than for the other two parties, with just 1.55% of the vote in Solihull in 1987. Compared to the other parties, the standard deviation figures are lower and more constant, rising from 8.97 in 1987 to 10.06 in 1992, varying by just 0.88 points over the following elections. These figures indicate that of the three parties, the Liberal Democrats not only have lower average vote shares, but there is a great deal less variation around these means. Over the six elections, there has been a gradual increase in the highest Liberal Democrat vote shares, from 53.62 to 61.97 percent of the vote, indicating that Liberal Democrats are consolidating their support in their safest constituencies.

Variations in vote share: stability and volatility

The aim of exploring variables that explain both stability and change in party vote shares and their associations with party vote shares is to precede a multivariate model. Such a model can be used to effectively examine the relationship between low levels of campaigning and changes in party vote shares. Drawing on existing literature, constituency socio-demographics are investigated first which represent a source of stability in vote share. The discussion then turns to two variables which introduce volatility into examinations of party vote share: incumbency and campaigning.

Constituency demographics and vote share

Although the main premise of this thesis is a rational choice approach to campaigning and voter behaviour, it has also been informed by sociological theories of voter behaviour. Here the association between constituency demographics and varying levels of vote share for the three parties are examined. This draws on existing literature (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Clarke et al., 2004) linking support for parties with particular socio-demographic groups, in particular linking professional workers with support for the Conservatives (Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson, 1994) and routine workers with support for Labour (Syed and Whiteley, 2002). This corresponds to the discussion of the origins of marginality in chapter four which saw clear links between support for parties and sources of traditional party support. The key demographic variable for studies of voter behaviour in the UK is that of social class, here measured using two occupational indicators detailing the proportion of professionals and routine workers in a constituency. However, the proportion of professional workers and routine workers were highly correlated, so only a measure of routine workers was utilised. There should be evidence of a negative association between higher levels of routine workers in a constituency and Conservative vote share, but in contrast, Labour vote shares are expected to show positive correlations with constituencies with higher levels of routine workers.

Research has also linked high levels of owner occupiers and Conservative support (Heath et al., 1991: 106) most famously expressed by Margaret Thatcher who described the Conservatives in 1974 as ‘the owner-occupier’s party’ (Thatcher, 1974). Therefore, a

positive relationship is expected between the proportion of owner occupiers and Conservative vote share. The opposite should be true for Labour who traditionally see higher levels of support in constituencies with a large percentage of council housing tenants (Pattie, Whiteley, Johnston and Seyd, 1994:477).

Other variables are likely to be associated with party vote share, although they are not available to study over the period. Constituencies with higher proportions of ethnic minority voters are likely to coincide with lower Conservative vote shares and higher Labour vote shares. Labour has positioned itself as a party acting in the interest of immigrants (Heath et al., 2011; Heath et al., 2013; Saggar, 2000), particularly as Labour administrations were responsible for guiding legislation such as the Race Relations Act though parliament 'as explicit vehicles for protecting ethnic minority rights and interests (Sanders et al., 2013:3). In contrast, the Conservative right wing has held back the party's ability to appeal to ethnic minority voters (Saggar, 1998). This association between Labour and ethnic minority voters has been supported by empirical evidence (Heath and Khan, 2012) in contemporary elections. Seyd, Whiteley, and Billingshurst's (2006:25) investigation of Liberal Democrat membership also found that the party is 'dominated by members who classify themselves as white/European, with these members making up 99 per cent of the total so high correlations between the white population and Liberal Democrat vote share might also be expected, were data available.

To explore the link between constituency demographics and party vote share, bivariate correlations were conducted across the period and the results can be seen in table 7.2. These correlations offer an indication of whether any of the relationships between socio-demographic variables and support for certain parties are significant over the whole period. If required any interesting significant relationships will be expanded upon in a more detailed analysis. For continuity between the two operationalisations of local electoral outcomes, the four variables explored in relation to turnout in the last chapter were selected.

Table 7.2: Bivariate correlations between socio-demographics and party vote share 1987-2010

	Con vote share	Labour vote share	Lib Dem vote share
Owner Occupiers	.100**	-.187**	.159**
Retired	.007	.019	-.035*
Routine workers	-.306**	.142**	-.011
Migrants	.078**	-.127**	.133**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

What is clear from the table is that a surprising number of the relationships are significant for the entire period but weak. Despite the correlations across the period giving a general indication of constituency socio-demographics and party vote shares, some key associations may be extracted. Firstly, the correlations between party vote shares and the proportion of owner occupiers in a constituency is as expected; constituencies with higher levels are significantly and positively associated (albeit weakly) with Conservative and Liberal Democrat vote shares over the period. In contrast, the correlation for Labour over the period is significant and negative, indicating that higher levels of support for Labour are associated with lower levels of owner occupiers. While the results of the correlations for the retired population are positive for the Conservatives and Labour, neither is significant and the results are very weak; this is reflected by the significant but negative (and again weak) correlation result for the period between the percentage of retired people and Liberal Democrat vote share.

Labour's support has historically been strongly associated with the working class, often operationalized as routine workers and the results from the table seem to support this, with a positive and significant correlation between the routine workers and Labour vote share. The table also indicates that constituencies with higher levels of Conservatives and Liberal Democrat vote shares are negatively correlated with routine workers, although the result is stronger and only significant for the Conservatives (-.306 against -.011 for the Liberal Democrats). Constituencies with higher proportions of migrants are significantly associated with higher levels of vote shares for the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, but for Labour the direction of the correlation (again significant) is negative, indicating that as the Labour vote share in constituencies increased, the proportion of migrants decreased.

Although this has given us a general picture of the correlations between constituency socio-demographics and party vote shares, they can be explored in more detail by disaggregating two variables which have shown interesting results on an election-by-election basis: the proportion of owner occupiers and the proportion of routine workers, the results of which are shown in table 7.2.

Table 7.3: Bivariate correlations between socio-demographics and party vote share

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative						
Owner Occupiers	.246**	.394**	.603**	.576**	.485**	.610**
Routine workers	-.344**	-.171**	-.727**	-.251**	-.352**	-.407**
Labour						
Owner Occupiers	-.199**	-.501**	-.536**	-.484**	-.326**	-.553**
Routine workers	.346**	.117**	.602	.228**	.405**	.419**
Lib Dem						
Owner Occupiers	.032	.361**	.257**	.133**	.004	.093*
Routine workers	-.180**	-.024	-.290**	-.093	-.243**	-.318**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

There is a consistently positive and significant correlation between Conservative vote share and the percentage of owner occupiers in a constituency, although this relationship varies greatly in strength. While the result for 1987 is the weakest of the period at .246, it strengthens in 1992 before reaching a highly moderate .603 in 1997. The strength does drop in 2001 and 2005 (.452 and .485 respectively), but peaks in 2010 at .610. These results indicate a generally moderate link between constituency owner occupiers and Conservative vote share, echoing the findings of the literature.

A negative relationship between Conservative vote share and the percentage of routine workers can be observed, once again with the lowest value in 1992 (-.171) and with a strong correlation in 1997 (-.727); all results for the percentage of routine workers are also significant. In each election during the period, therefore, higher proportions of routine workers were significantly associated with lower levels of Conservative votes in constituencies.

Correlations between Labour vote share and the proportion of owner occupiers were also disaggregated to examine the overall negative relationship in more detail. Existing literature links lower levels of owner occupiers and Labour vote shares, and this is supported when

looking at the results of the correlations at elections over the period although the strength does vary. Whereas the association is weak in 1987 at -.199, all other correlations are moderate with a slight strengthening in 1992, 1997 and a peak of -.553 in 2010. Labour vote share should also be significantly and positively correlated to the proportion of routine workers in a constituency at each election. The results of the election-specific correlations certainly support this, with positive and significant correlations between the two variables at all elections in the period. The strength does vary, with the weakest correlation of .117 in 1992 and the strongest in 1997 at .602, which reflects similar patterns from the correlations examining Conservative vote share.

Table 7.2 indicated certain similarities in the demographic profiles of constituencies with higher levels of Conservative and Liberal Democrat vote share, particularly owner occupiers and the occupational variable indicating class. When disaggregating the correlations between the proportion of owner occupiers and Liberal Democrat vote share, however, the results are less consistent than for the Conservatives; with significant correlations for four of the six elections (the results were insignificant in 1987 and 2005). For those years with significant results, even though they are all positive (indicating that constituencies with higher portions of such occupiers are associated with higher levels of Liberal Democrat vote share), there is a consistent decline from a high of .361 in 1992 to just .093 in 2010.

Overall these results indicate support for associations between constituency demographic profiles and party vote share, particularly when considering variables measuring owner occupiers and those in routine occupations. The demographic differences between the parties were particularly strong at the 1997 election, the only landslide during the period covered. There are also certain implications that these results have for the multivariate model used at the end of this chapter. Firstly, as explored in chapter four, constituency socio-demographics provide a partial picture of constituency marginality, with several variables, particularly indicators of social class, associated with constituencies held more safely by the three parties. Also, there are links between demographic variables and campaigning levels, which despite historical dealignment still maintain a presence in contemporary UK electoral politics.

Vote share and length of tenure

Tenure length is an important source of change from election to election; it never remains the same as each election adds to the length of tenure of an incumbent, or in the case of seat change begins a new tenure. Existing literature from the USA (Holbrook and Tidmarsh, 1991, Holbrook 1996) has also indicated the importance of tenure to the effectiveness of campaigning; even though Jacobson's (1987) exploration of Congressional elections primarily focuses on the differences in campaign effectiveness between incumbent and opposition candidates, he also found evidence for the impact of tenure on vote share, with first-term incumbents receiving a boost of between 2.3 percentage points (1962 through 1966) and 6.8 points (1968 through 1978). This boost (termed a 'sophomore surge' by Jacobson, 1987:29) did not extend either to those competing their first election or longer-serving incumbents, with diminishing electoral returns the longer the incumbent held the local tenure.

Norton and Wood (1990) applied this idea of a sophomore surge to the UK context by exploring the impact of first-term incumbents on constituency party vote shares at the 1983 general election, finding that such MPs had a greater positive effect upon vote share than *both* non-incumbent candidates and MPs with longer tenures. This is likely to be due to the use of a first-term election as a chance to establish a personal vote in a constituency (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987) prior to the 'normal law of diminishing returns' (Wood and Norton, 1992:229). These findings were echoed in their subsequent study (Wood and Norton, 1992) comparing first-term incumbents in both 1983 and 1987, once again finding beneficial effects. Existing evidence from both the US and UK suggests that candidates fighting an election as a first time incumbent are likely to increase their vote share when compared to other candidates, and also that the longer an MP's tenure in a constituency is, the lower their vote share will be as the cushion established in their first-term is eroded.

To explore the link between tenure and vote share, all three measures of seat tenure as used previously (two continuous measures of seat and career tenure and a binary variable identifying first-term incumbents) have been investigated, with the results of bivariate correlations between the two continuous measures seen in table 7.4. Constituencies were divided according to which of the three parties held the seat at the commencement of the election campaign. However, one important alteration to vote share has been made; tenure is a source of change in vote share, so instead of looking at overall vote share for the parties

over the period, a continuous measure of changes in vote shares between elections has been used. If the trends in the literature are to be reflected, a negative relationship is expected between the length of the incumbent's tenure and changes in their party vote share as the personal vote established in their first term erodes.

Table 7.4: Bivariate correlations between tenure measures and vote share according to incumbent party

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Conservative seats			
Seat	-.060**	.101**	-.123**
Career	-.038	-.018	-.010
Labour seats			
Seat	-.111**	.016	.028
Career	-.033	.010	.032
Liberal Democrat seats			
Seat	-.063	.099	-.064
Career	.027	.128	-.182**

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results of the correlations between Conservative incumbent tenure and Conservative vote share change across the period are, as expected, negative. However, only seat tenure for Conservative incumbents is significantly correlated with vote share changes. This result indicates that longer career tenures for Conservative incumbents are associated with decreases in Conservative vote share, although the correlation is weak at .060. This is reflected by similar patterns for Liberal Democrat incumbents, with longer career and seat tenures again negatively correlated to changes in their vote share, although only the career tenure measure is significant. For Labour, in contrast, the results for both career and seat tenure are weakly positively correlated with changes in Labour vote share, although neither is significant.

While the results for incumbent parties in constituencies are as expected for two of the parties, the picture for opposing parties and the association of tenure with changes in their vote shares is interesting. A positive correlation could suggest the erosion of the personal

vote of the incumbent as tenure increases, but the results of the correlations are mixed in this regard. In Conservative-held constituencies, rises in Labour vote shares were significantly associated with longer tenure in the seat, although the correlation is weak, yet longer career tenures of Conservative incumbents were negatively (but not significantly) associated with rises in Labour vote share. In Labour-held constituencies, while there were positive but insignificant correlations for rises in Liberal Democrat vote share and the two tenure measures, the correlations were negative for the Conservatives.

These results, although not controlling for other factors, indicate that longer tenures for Conservative and Liberal Democrat incumbents are correlated with decreases in their party vote share, which suggests that people might dislike Conservative and Liberal Democrat incumbents. The final tenure measure is a binary measure identifying those incumbents who were fighting their first election as the incumbent. An independent-samples t-test was conducted between this binary variable and the corresponding party vote share change for constituencies held by each of the three parties; a first-term boost in vote share would be indicated by there being a significant difference in the mean vote share change between first-term incumbents and others.

The results are promising, and indicate that across the period there have been significant differences in vote share between first-term incumbents and other incumbents from the same party. For the Conservatives, first-term incumbents saw, on average, a boost of 1.1 points whereas other Conservative candidates saw an overall rise in their vote share of 0.25 percentage points. This difference is also significant, with a t-test value of -3.048. Very similar and significant patterns can also be observed when comparing the differences in vote share changes between Labour first-term incumbents and other incumbents from the same party; first-termers saw an increase of .52 points, whereas other saw an average decrease in their vote share of 2.48 percentage points. The largest differences between the two types of incumbent can be seen for the Liberal Democrats, with first-termers receiving a significant boost of 5.13 percentage points against a reduction of 1.26 points for others. These results support the findings of existing research, indicating that not only did first-term incumbents for all three parties boost vote share when compared to other incumbents from the same party, but these boosts were significant.

Campaigning and vote share

Research conducted in the USA (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1992; Patterson and Caldeira, 1984) ranging from studies of campaign expenditure, (Jacobson 1987; 2006) to experimental studies contrasting the effectiveness of different campaign methods (Bochel and Denver, 1971; Gerber and Green, 2000) have linked campaigning and rises in vote share. The past twenty years have also seen studies repeatedly indicate that intense levels of campaigning are effective in raising party vote share in the UK context.

To link campaigning and party vote shares in the period covered here, initial bivariate correlations were conducted between the three campaigning measures for each party and respective party vote shares (table 7.5). If the findings are to follow those indicated by the existing literature, positive and significant correlations are expected between constituency campaigning by a party and their resulting vote share.

Table 7.5: Bivariate correlations between campaigning measures and party vote shares 1987-2010

	Conservative vote share	**Labour vote share**	**Liberal Democrat vote share**
Spending			
Conservative	.643**	-.537**	.216**
Labour	-.241**	.472**	-.384**
Liberal Democrat	.240**	-.525**	.672**
Doorstep canvass			
Conservative	.339**	-.236**	.072*
Labour doorstep	.107**	.020	-.127**
Liberal Democrat	.216**	-.330**	.318**
Telephone canvass			
Conservative	.163**	-.116**	.032
Labour	.063	.116**	-.215**
Liberal Democrat	.183**	-.252**	.244**

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N for spending = 3804, n for canvassing. Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results of these correlations do indeed support these findings, with consistently positive and significant correlations between spending by each of the three parties and their respective vote shares. These results indicate that higher levels of campaign spending are associated with higher levels of party vote share over the period, with the strongest correlations for the Liberal Democrats (.672) and the weakest for Labour at .472. These results are reflected by the positive correlations between the two canvassing measures and

the respective party's vote share. Of the two canvassing variables, doorstep canvassing offers the most significant correlations, with higher levels of such campaigning by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats positively associated with higher vote shares for the parties (.339 and .318 respectively); although Labour's correlation is also positive, it is insignificant. All three correlations are positively and significant for telephone canvassing, with the Liberal Democrats having the strongest correlation at .224, then Labour on .116 and the Conservatives on .163. It is interesting to note that for the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, telephone canvassing was more weakly correlated with vote share than doorstep canvassing, reflecting Gerber and Green's findings that face-to-face methods of canvassing had a greater impact than more impersonal methods.

The effect of campaign levels on party vote share

The results of the bivariate correlations between campaigning and vote share are, of course, only initial indications for the relationship between the two variables and should be treated with caution, particularly as they take no other factors into account. To fully examine the impact of campaigning levels on vote share, a multivariate model is necessary, drawing on rival explanations for variation in vote share as explored earlier in this chapter. Alongside the independent variables (the three campaigning measures) and the dependent variable (party vote share) additional variables have been incorporated to ensure that the impact of the campaign levels can be accurately measured.

The model constructed in the previous chapter will be retained here with minimal variation for two reasons; firstly this ensures that the results of the regressions examining both turnout and vote share can be compared. The use of two different operationalisations of the dependent variable of the thesis hypothesis means that it is appealing to ensure that the conclusions drawn from both these chapters are comparable. Secondly, nearly identical models have been maintained in existing research examining the impact of campaigning on both vote share and turnout (see Denver et al., 2004; Fisher and Denver, 2009).

Drawing on the existing model, there are two groups of control variables which measure both continuity and change in vote share. The interaction between continuity and change is a key tension in this thesis, as in certain circumstances the causes of volatility may overwhelm the sources of stability, causing change. There are two sets of control variables in the model

accounting for stability in vote share: constituency demographics and previous vote share. The model created in the last chapter used four control variables based on socio-demographic variables, controlling for the proportion of owner occupiers, retired people, routine workers and migrants in a constituency. Earlier in this chapter the variations in party vote shares according to the demographic profiles of constituencies were considered. Examining the results of these correlations, the variables offer a good level of correlation with vote share for all three parties across the period, although the results for the retired population are only significant for one party. Yet when correlations were conducted between the retired population and party vote share for individual elections, the majority of the results were significant, so it would appear that the cross-election correlations in table 7.1 underplay the significance of this variable. Therefore, all four socio-demographic variables used in the model from the last chapter have been maintained to examine vote share.

A recent development in the modelling of constituency campaign effectiveness (Fisher and Denver, 2009 for example) has been the inclusion of previous measures of the dependent variable, leading to the inclusion of previous turnout in the model from the last chapter and the inclusion of previous vote share here. Actual vote shares from the preceding election have been used, supplemented by notional vote shares when boundary changes have occurred between elections. When exploring correlations between previous and resulting vote share, the results were strong and significant for all three parties, ranging from a correlation of .838 to .941 for the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives across the period respectively. The strength of these correlations for all parties emphasises how important it is to control for previous vote share when examining the effectiveness of campaigning on party vote share.

The key issue here, as in the previous chapter, is how to combine socio-demographic variables with previous measures of vote share. Earlier studies into the effectiveness of constituency campaigning employed a range of socio-demographic measures as controls (see Pattie et al., 1994); Whiteley and Seyd's (1994) study of Labour party campaigning controlled for a range of socio-demographic variables such as class, the proportion of council housing tenants and the unemployed. Yet the more recent studies have increasingly used previous vote share as a control for constituency demographics to take into account 'the underlying, long-term, relatively unchanging geography of party support' (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b:385). Interestingly, Seyd and Whiteley (1994) ran two models contrasting the explanatory power of previous vote share and socio-demographics in their study of the effectiveness of the Labour campaign in 1987; they found that by using the previous Labour

vote share in a constituency as a proxy for socio-demographic variables, the explanatory power of the model was raised considerably by 13 percentage points to 97%. The possibility of using previous vote share as a proxy for demographic variables is also raised by Denver et al. (2004:296) who suggest that if controlling for previous vote share there is no need to also control for constituency demographics; using this measure alone allows us to 'effectively control for all the contextual constituency factors normally associated with variations in levels of party support', offering a more parsimonious model.

In regards to the present study, previous measures of the dependent variables in conjunction with the four socio-demographic variables were found to offer the better explanatory power, with previous turnout raising the explanatory power considerably. For vote share similar trials were conducted, using the same four socio-demographic variables as before, with three alternatives possible; using previous vote share exclusively as a control for the local social context, using the socio-demographic variables in isolation, or both sets of variables entered together. Thorough testing across the period indicated that a combination of the selected socio-demographic variables and a measure of previous vote share offered the greatest explanatory power, although previous vote share once again contributed most significantly.

The previous chapter used a measure of the incumbent total length of the incumbent's career tenure at each election, which was also used in the chapter exploring marginality. Three different measures of tenure and their association with party vote share have been considered earlier in this chapter, with most of the results for the career variable in the expected direction, although not all of them were significant. All three tenure measures were trialled in the multivariate model, and the career measure was found to repeatedly boost the explanatory power of the model, so this has been maintained.

A final set of two variables was also entered into the model to control for marginality and interactions between other variables. Firstly, constituency marginality was controlled for, using actual or notional figures for the previous majority of a constituency going into an election. Marginality is of course an important variable, with well documented evidence that at the beginning of the period under investigation the Conservatives spent highly in their safe constituencies (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b), which of course would have high vote shares for the Conservatives. Although marginality is related to vote share in a different way to turnout, it is nonetheless an important variable to include, and in trials was found to boost the explanatory power. Secondly, multiplicative interaction terms between marginality and the campaigning variables were maintained from the previous chapter.

Here the potentially detrimental impact of low level campaigns in safe constituencies on vote share is tested by firstly examining the relationship between the two variables implicitly by using continuous measures of the campaigning variables. Secondly, the impact of such campaigns will be examined more directly by using the binary variable identifying low level campaigns as created in chapter five. Linear regressions were conducted between the campaign variables for each of the three parties and party vote shares, controlling for the additional factors detailed above. Spending for all three parties, including party-specific interaction terms with previous majority, was combined in a single model to control for the effect of spending by other parties in the constituency. If the results of the models are to confirm that campaigning is effective in raising vote share (and by extension less campaigning may have a detrimental impact), positive and significant results should be observed between the two variables, although this may not only vary between elections (due to increasingly rational party campaigning strategies) but also between parties. Table 7.6 only details the unstandardized coefficients for the campaigning variables and the adjusted r^2 across the 1987 to 2010 period for simplicity.

Table 7.6: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of campaign spending on vote share between 1987 and 2010 (full results in Appendix 12)

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Conservative spend	.034** (.007)	-.036** (.010)	-.013 (.008)
Labour spend	-.039** (006)	.122** (.008)	-.059** (.007)
Liberal Democrat spend	-.014** (.005)	-.002* (.007)	.055** (.007)
Adjusted r^2	.917	.878	.796

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The results are interesting, with significant results not only between party spending and their resulting vote share, but also for the effects of other party spending. The explanatory power of the models is good, with between 79.6 percent and 91.7 percent of variation in party vote shares explained. A single percentage point increase in the amount spent by a Conservative candidate led to a rise of .034 percentage points in Conservative vote share. The impact of

marginality on the relationship between Conservative candidate spending and vote share is interesting, with clear indications that the safer the constituency, the more positive the impact of spending upon vote share. The same increase in Labour candidate spending led to a more substantial increase of .122 percentage points in Labour vote share, with the Liberal Democrats boosting their vote share by .055 points for each percentage point of the legal maximum spent. As Liberal Democrat spending increases, so does the party's vote share, particularly when the candidate spends above 69 percent of the legal maximum in a constituency. However, the impact of spending upon vote share depends upon the marginality of a constituency. In contrast to Conservative spending, the Liberal Democrats see the lowest impact of spending on vote share in constituencies with previous majorities of 20 percentage points and above. Incumbency may play an important part here, with only 3.65% of these constituencies held by the Liberal Democrats over the period. Of the three parties, the Conservatives have the smallest coefficient, which may be attributable to the already stated less rational spending patterns of the Conservatives in the early part of the period under examination. Labour's coefficient is the largest of the three parties, which could be a consequence of the targeted campaigning and the subsequent Labour landslide of 1997. The interaction of marginality upon the relationship between Labour spending and vote share indicate that overall the party spent more in constituencies with majorities of over 20 percentage points, although without knowing constituency incumbency it is difficult to suggest whether this may be evidence of expansionist spending in 1997 or more defensive spending in 2010. These coefficients offer clear support for campaign spending by a party having a positive effect on that party's vote share.

Considering the impact of spending by Labour and the Liberal Democrats on Conservative vote share, there are clear signs that as spending by these candidates rises, Conservative vote share falls, with Labour's negative impact on Conservative vote share larger than the positive impact of Conservative spending. Therefore between 1987 and 2010, for every percentage point increase in spending by Labour candidates, Conservative vote share fell by .039 percentage points. Constituency marginality affects this relationship, with the negative impact of Labour spending on Conservative vote share increasing the safer a constituency is.

The effect of Liberal Democrat spending had a greater impact in reducing Conservative vote share (by .014 percentage points) than on Labour vote share (.002 percentage points). However, both Conservative and Liberal Democrat spending reduced Labour vote share, with the negative impact increasing the safer constituencies became. When observing the coefficients for Liberal Democrat vote share, Labour spending has the greater negative

effect, with a .059 percentage point decrease in Liberal Democrat vote share for every percentage point increase in spending. Marginality affects the impact of both Conservative and Labour spending on Liberal Democrat vote share, with the negative impact decreasing the safer the constituency.

These figures offer support for the positive impact of campaigning on party vote share, and implicitly indicate that low levels of campaigning might have a negative impact. Yet they do not give a great deal of information on variation between elections. Table 7.7 displays the election-by-election coefficients for the same model to examine trends in the relationship between campaign spending and vote share in more detail.

Of the six coefficients for Conservative spending, all but 2001 are in the expected direction, with four of the six being significant. The model also offers a good fit, with between 73.5 and 95% of variation in Conservative vote share explained. The negative coefficient between Conservative spending and vote share in 2001 may be related to the stringent nature of the model, although this would not explain why coefficients for the other years are positive. In this year, spending by Conservative candidates *was* positively and significantly related to Conservative vote share in the model until the control for previous vote share was added. It could be attributed to the landslide defeat of the Conservatives in 1997, meaning that spending at the subsequent election had more ground to make up before actually boosting vote share. It is also possible that the notable transition to a more rational spending distribution after the Conservative defeat in 1997 did not fully start to reap electoral rewards until 2005 (a finding echoed in Pattie and Johnston, 2009a).

Despite the result for 2001, the coefficients for the other years offer good support for the effectiveness of spending by Conservative candidates in increasing their vote share, although the coefficients do vary in strength. As Pattie and Johnston (2003b) found, Conservative spending early in the period was ineffective in boosting Conservative vote share, largely due to the strong local associations in their safe constituencies. Excluding the 2001 result, the strength of the significant coefficients does indeed increase at elections from 1992 onwards, peaking in 2005 when a single percentage point increase in spending by Conservative candidates led to a significant increase of .129 percentage points in their vote share, even when controlling for spending by the other parties. The interaction effect of marginality on the relationship between Conservative spending and vote share is interesting as it indicates that at each election, the safer the constituency, the more positive the impact of Conservative spending on the party's vote share. Conservative candidates spent most highly in ultra-safe constituencies, whereas in the latter three elections of the period, spending by the party in

these constituencies fell dramatically. Without looking at the incumbency of the constituency at this stage it is difficult to explain this fully, but it is likely to be due not only to less rational spending patterns for the party during the earlier period, but also the effect of the 1997 Labour landslide.

Table 7.7: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of campaign spending on vote share (full results in Appendix 13)

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative vote share						
Conservative spend	.026 (.040)	.018* (.020)	.052** (.010)	-.096** (.037)	.129** (.019)	.019 (.011)
Labour spend	.008 (.035)	-.018 (.017)	-.040** (.011)	-.017 (.026)	-.076** (.015)	-.006 (.009)
Liberal Democrat spend	-.051 (.027)	.000 (.013)	.002 (.007)	.031 (.024)	-.077** (.015)	.000 (.008)
Adjusted r^2	.735	.872	.950	.804	.879	.950
Labour vote share						
Conservative spend	.042 (.048)	.020 (.030)	-.042** (.016)	.063 (.038)	-.022 (.021)	-.065** (.015)
Labour spend	.033 (.046)	.076** (.024)	.101** (.018)	.024 (.031)	.214** (.017)	.068** (.014)
Liberal Democrat spend	-.010 (.034)	-.032 (.019)	-.068** (.012)	-.040 (.027)	-.047** (.016)	-.013 (.011)
Adjusted r^2	.748	.857	.953	.847	.885	.917
Liberal Democrat vote share						
Conservative spend	-.077** (.029)	-.011 (.022)	.007 (.015)	-.010 (.037)	-.040* (.017)	-.003 (.012)
Labour spend	-.057* (.027)	-.052** (.018)	-.076** (.017)	-.022 (.028)	-.071** (.013)	-.047** (.011)
Liberal Democrat spend	.099** (.021)	.018 (.016)	.075** (.013)	.089* (.035)	.165** (.014)	.069** (.011)
Adjusted r^2	.663	.750	.878	.675	.832	.865

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The model explains a very high level of variation in Labour vote share, ranging from 74.8% in 1987 to 95.3% in 1997. Positive coefficients were expected between party campaigning and party vote share, which is confirmed by the spending coefficients for Labour. However, of the six elections, two coefficients (in 1987 and 2001) are insignificant, which is in contrast to the findings of Pattie et al. (1994) and Denver et al. (2004), with both papers observing positive and significant results for Labour in 1987 and 2001 respectively; the reason for this deviation could be attributed to the stricter model employed here which supresses the campaigning variables. The result for 2001 may also be attributed to the national incumbency context of Labour; the landslide of 1997 had left the party with a large number of seats to defend in 2001. Such a large majority made it more difficult for Labour to target their campaigning at this election (Seyd, 2001), and also made increasing vote share in its constituencies less of a priority. As the model looks specifically at increases in vote share, it may be that it underplays the Labour campaign of 2001 which was more focused upon maintaining the majority, not increasing local vote shares. Support for this can be found in the interaction term which indicates that, in comparison to previous election years, constituency marginality had less of an impact upon the relationship between Labour spending and vote share in both 2001 and 2005. Labour campaign spending seems to be more effective where it is significant, with larger coefficients for those election years. The smallest significant result is in 2010, when a single percentage point increase in Labour candidate spending raised Labour vote share by .068 percentage points. This follows Fisher, Cutts and Fieldhouse's findings (2011:822) that 'given that there was a widespread expectation that the party would lose majority rule, that it was required to target so many seats, and that it was unpopular and on the defensive', Labour actually ran a remarkably effective campaign in 2010.

The largest coefficient for Labour came in 2005, with a .214 percentage point increase in vote share for every increase in candidate spending, which is in contrast to Pattie and Johnston's (2009b: 431) conclusions that while Labour were still able to run efficient targeted campaigns, by 2005 their campaigning was less effective in altering their constituency vote shares. This difference could be attributable to the differing models and regression techniques employed.

While the model explains between 66.3 and 87.8% of variation in Liberal Democrat vote share, this is slightly lower than for the other two parties. The most encouraging overall picture for the effectiveness of candidate spending is for the Liberal Democrats, with the coefficients all positive and significant at all elections during the period bar 1992. This, of

course, is to be expected, as the Liberal Democrats have historically been the most efficient party at targeting campaigning, largely out of necessity as the smallest of the three parties (Pattie and Johnston, 2003b; 2009). The lowest significant coefficient came in 2010, when a single percentage point increase led to a .069 point increase in vote share for the Liberal Democrats, with the highest in 2005, when for every percentage point rise in spending, the Liberal Democrat candidates saw a boost in their vote share of .165 percentage points, which reflects their success at this election, gaining ten constituencies. What is clear when exploring the interaction effect of marginality is how consistent the impact it has upon Liberal Democrat spending and vote share, which supports the notion that the party runs the most tactical campaigns. In all election years, spending by the party has a far greater impact on vote share the more marginal the constituency. In 1997, once a Liberal Democrat candidate had spent at least 22% of the legal maximum, a significant rise in vote share can be observed in all constituencies except for ultra-safe seats, where the impact was weaker.

Table 7.8 displays summary results for the same model run across the period with the two canvassing variables as the independent variables. The coefficients show that doorstep canvassing by the Conservatives did not have a significant impact on Conservative vote share, although the impact is slightly positive. Marginality has little impact upon the relationship between Conservative doorstep canvassing and the party's vote share until a constituency's previous majority rises above 20 percentage points. Then, as canvassing increases, there is a corresponding rise in Conservative vote share. Doorstep canvassing by Labour was negatively related to Conservative vote share, although this was insignificant. The coefficients for the effect of telephone canvassing by the Conservative on the party's vote share over the period are in the opposite direction to what was expected, with such canvassing being associated with a decline in Conservative vote share, although this was insignificant. The interaction effect of marginality on this relationship offers rather mixed results. However, in the safest constituencies, it appears that intense telephone canvassing increased Conservative vote share. Most (55%) of these constituencies were held by Labour, and Conservative vote share is highly negatively related to Labour vote share.

Table 7.8: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of canvassing on vote share (full results in Appendix 14)

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Doorstep canvass			
Conservatives	.017 (.016)	.003 (.021)	-.027 (.016)
Labour	-.021 (.016)	.015 (.021)	.009 (.017)
Liberal Democrats	.003 (.025)	-.041 (.033)	.000 (.027)
Adjusted r^2	.917	.926	.851
Telephone canvass			
Conservatives	-.063(.135)	.027 (.056)	-.040 (.052)
Labour	.025 (.122)	.011 (.049)	.013 (.047)
Liberal Democrats	-.139 (.700)	-.062 (.280)	-.172 (.271)
Adjusted r^2	.836	.953	.881

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The coefficients for the impact of doorstep canvassing by Labour candidates on Labour's vote share are, like the Conservatives, positive, but also insignificant. However, once the previous majority of a constituency rises above 14.99 percentage points, the impact of doorstep canvassing on Labour vote share becomes negative. Telephone canvassing by Labour's candidates is also positively related to Labour vote share, but once again insignificant. Confusingly, telephone canvassing by Labour candidates is positively related to party vote share for all three parties. Marginality has little impact on this relationship, although the positive impact of such campaigning upon Labour vote share lessens once a constituency's previous majority rises above 19.99 percentage points. For canvassing by the Liberal Democrats, the results are mixed, with doorstep canvassing making no impact on Liberal Democrat vote share. However, the interactions indicate that the relationship is positive, although this lessens as the safety of the constituency rises. It would appear from the results of the telephone canvassing by the party that it actually reduced Liberal Democrat

vote share, as well as having a negative impact on vote share of the other two parties. Constituency marginality had no impact in this case.

It appears from these results that doorstep canvassing for all parties boosted their own vote share, although not significantly. However, it seems that telephone canvassing by both the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats actually decreased their vote shares, although these values are once again not significant, linking back to the findings of both Gerber and Green (2000) and to Fisher and Denver (2009).

These results generally support the effectiveness of campaigning in boosting vote shares for the three main parties, particularly so for candidate spending. This is despite the use of a very stringent model including a control for previous vote share which is likely to reduce the size of the campaigning coefficient (Whiteley and Seyd, 1994). That any of the variables remain significant in such a stringent model offers clear evidence that campaign spending does affect party vote share. In addition, even though the increases in vote share caused by campaigning are relatively small, they represent the impact of a single percentage point increase in spending, when in reality spending varies considerably (the highest spend during the period was 170.39 percent of the legal maximum whereas in several constituencies at least one of the parties spent nothing at all). Lastly, some constituencies have extremely low majorities (the Conservatives had a majority of just 0.01% in Leicester South going into the 1987 election), so even the slightest boost in vote share has the potential to have a dramatic impact. These results all indicate that campaign spending has a positive impact on party vote share, so by extension, less spending may lead to a smaller increase or indeed decline. Yet with the results above this cannot conclusively be decided: to do so the variable identifying low level campaigning needs to be entered into the model.

The effect of low level campaigning on vote share

Chapter five demonstrated the different ways in which (the limited) existing literature measures relative levels of campaigning, and drawing on these influences, two alternative measures of relative levels were developed; one party specific and the other combining the measures for the top two parties. The measure developed for this thesis draw largely on the influence of Denver et al. (2004), who examine the relative effectiveness of campaigning in different quartiles of campaign intensity. Like this study, they investigate the effectiveness of

relative levels of campaign activity upon both turnout and vote share by using direct measures of party activity (to investigate vote share) and measures for the top two parties (to investigate turnout). Interestingly, in terms of the implications for this study, they find that the results do vary according to the quartile into which the campaign activity score falls, with a consistently negative relationship between the campaigns in the first quartile and falls in vote share; for example, a low level Liberal Democrat campaign in 1992 reduced the party's constituency vote share by 4.2 percentage points (Denver et al., 2004:298). These results offer support for the third sub-hypothesis of this thesis that low level campaigns have a detrimental impact on party vote shares.

To examine whether low level campaigning has a detrimental impact on party vote shares, the model used in the previous section has been retained, but the independent variable becomes a binary variable identifying low level campaigns by each party. For each of the three campaigning measures (for each of the parties), two binary variables have been created, with one measuring low levels of campaigning amongst incumbents and the other amongst opposition candidates. The control variables remain as before to ensure constancy in the models (with slight adjustments to the interaction terms) and the models are expected to explain a high degree of variation in vote share due to the inclusion of previous vote share. To support the hypothesis that low level campaigns have a detrimental impact on party vote share, negative and significant coefficients should be observed for the campaigning variables; the results are also likely to vary considerably according to the incumbency of the candidate, with low level campaigning by opposition candidates expected to see greater detrimental effects.

Looking firstly at the results for the spending regressions in table 7.9, the coefficients for Conservative incumbents are indeed negative from 1997 onwards. However, only 1997 is significant, with low level campaign spending by Conservative incumbents reducing Conservative vote share by 1.78 percentage points, compared to other levels of spending. The impact of marginality upon this relationship is not consistent over the period, and in 1997 in particular it made no difference to the negative impact of low level campaigns on Conservative incumbent vote share. However in both 1987 and 1992, running such campaigns in ultra-safe constituencies held by the party led to a decline in the party vote share.

Table 7.9: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the Impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates (full results in Appendix 15)

	Incumbent low level campaigns	Opposition low level campaigns
1987		
Conservative	2.779 (2.622)	5.247 (4.328)
Labour	4.527 (4.062)	6.212* (3.015)
Liberal Democrat	17.931* (5.870)	-6.024 (3.204)
1992		
Conservative	.947 (1.053)	-1.788 (1.698)
Labour	-2.326 (1.547)	.535 (1.203)
Liberal Democrat	-1.635 (4.710)	2.303 (2.252)
1997		
Conservative	-1.780* (.777)	-2.255* (.928)
Labour	.275	-1.030 (1.588)
Liberal Democrat	-2.563 (5.808)	-14.354** (3.329)
2001		
Conservative	-1.087 (2.267)	-5.405* (2.406)
Labour	-3.438 (4.704)	-4.129 (3.027)
Liberal Democrat	26.115 (27.353)	-6.081 (9.982)
2005		
Conservative	-1.411 (1.340)	-4.906** (1.608)
Labour	-3.448* (1.405)	1.447 (2.325)
Liberal Democrat	-4.300 (13.220)	-3.987 (2.793)
2010		
Conservative	-.646(1.240)	-.001 (1.255)
Labour	-.243 (1.359)	-5.490* (2.169)
Liberal Democrat	-4.657 (3.695)	-6.127* (2.424)

*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Only the unstandardized coefficients for campaigning variables are shown.*

The coefficients for Conservative opposition candidates are more striking, with clearly negative results for all election years except 1987. In the three elections spanning 1997 to 2005, low level campaign spending by Conservative opposition candidates was significantly related to a drop in the party's vote share. Whereas in 1997, running such a campaign cost the Conservatives 2.25 percentage points of their vote share, in 2005 low level campaigns caused a drop of 4.91 percentage points in Conservative vote share. In 2001, when the Conservatives began to run more targeted campaigns than in previous elections, running low level spending campaigns in safe constituencies reduced Conservative vote share by 5.40 percentage points. Marginality also has a greater impact on the relationship between low level campaigns and Conservative vote share for opposition candidates than incumbents. Running such campaigns in constituencies with previous majorities of 20 percentage points and above led to a consistently more detrimental impact on Conservative vote share than constituencies with lower majorities. Both the incumbent and opposition candidate coefficients for the Conservatives are negative in four elections (1997, 2001, 2005 and 2010) during the period, all of which offers good evidence that low level campaign spending by the Conservatives, particularly by opposition candidates since 1997 has a negative impact on party vote share.

There are fairly similar results for the impact of low level campaign spending by Labour candidates. For incumbent Labour candidates, only two of the six elections show coefficients in the expected direction, with low level spending by Labour incumbents leading to a drop in Labour vote share of 2.33 and 3.45 percentage points in 1992 and 2005 respectively although only the latter is significant. Marginality has an interesting impact upon the relationship between low level incumbent campaigns and Labour vote share, with such campaigns having an increasingly detrimental impact as constituencies become more marginal. This is particularly strong in both 2005 and 2010 and may indicate more defensive campaigning by the party. There is a clear difference between the impact of low level campaign spending by Labour incumbent and opposition candidates; the coefficients for which reflect the expected results more closely. Indeed, in 1997, 2001 and 2010, low level campaign spending by Labour opposition candidates has reduced Labour vote share. In 2010, such campaigning significantly reduced Labour vote share by 4.85 percentage points. In this case, marginality clearly affects the impact of low level campaigns by Labour opposition candidates on party vote share. Consistently over the period, the safer a constituency becomes, the greater the detrimental impact of such campaigns on Labour vote share.

For the Liberal Democrats, Denver et al. (2004) saw the largest reductions in party vote share, a finding partly supported by the results in table 7.6. For Liberal Democrat incumbents, in 1992, 1997, 2005 and 2010 the coefficients are in the expected direction, although none are significant. Marginality has little consistent impact upon the relationship, although in 1997 there was a detrimental impact which increased as constituencies became safer. In contrast, at the 1992, 2005 and 2010 elections, the greatest negative impact of low level campaigns were seen in more marginal seats. The results for low level spending by Liberal Democrat opposition candidates are more consistent, with all coefficients, except 1992, negative indicating that such campaigns had a detrimental impact on the party's vote share. Of these five opposition coefficients, two (1997 and 2010) are significant, with the largest in 1997 when if a Liberal Democrat opposition candidate spent at a low level, the party's vote share was significantly reduced by a considerable 14.34 percentage points. This is a substantial decrease in vote share for opposition candidates indicating that low level spending campaigns by Liberal Democrat opposition candidates have a significant negative impact on Liberal Democrat vote share. Indications suggest that, in four of the elections, such campaigns have a greater impact on Liberal Democrat vote share when they are run in constituencies with previous majorities of between 10 and 15 percentage points, than in seats where it is 20 percentage points and above. However, it appears that this did not hold in 2010, where the detrimental impact of low levels of campaigning grew as constituencies became safer.

Relatively few of the results in table 7.9 are significant, which is disappointing, but perhaps understandable when using a strict model measuring the direct impact of low level campaigns, and more detail is revealed by the interaction terms. Unlike the previous chapter which used a binary variable combining the levels of campaigning by the top two parties to examine the impact of low level campaigns on turnout, the model in table 7.8 only measures campaigning by the party whose vote share is being examined. Potentially the impact of low level campaigns on party vote share is not being accounted for by the model which could explain the lack of significant results. However, alternative models controlling for spending by other parties in the constituency were found to make no difference to the results.

Despite the lack of significant results, an interesting pattern may be observed in the direction of the coefficients. From 1997 onwards, there is a shift from predominantly positive results, to more negative results. This coincides with an upsurge in strategic campaigning. It may be that in the earlier elections, negative results are not observed as often because there was less disparity in attention paid to constituencies of different marginalities, yet by 2010 when

incumbents and opponents of all three parties ran low level campaigns, they reduced their party's vote share in a constituency. In short, low level campaigns may often have a detrimental impact on party vote share, particularly for the local opposition parties, but this impact is not necessarily a significant one.

To examine the impact of low level canvassing by opposition and incumbent candidates, the regression models were rerun, this time with variables measuring the proportion of the constituency covered by both doorstep and telephone canvassing at all elections over the period.

Table 7.10: Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level canvassing on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates (full results in Appendix 16)

	Incumbent low level doorstep campaigns	Opposition low level doorstep campaigns	Incumbent low level telephone campaigns	Opposition low level telephone campaigns
Conservative vote share	.476 (.343)	-.171 (.568)	-1.083 (1.043)	-2.257 (1.171)
Labour vote share	.944 (.650)	-.725 (.433)	1.070 (1.915)	-1.220 (.905)
Liberal Democrat vote share	-5.878 (9.373)	-.290 (.947)	-21.509 (80.733)	-8.944** (3.133)

*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Only the unstandardized coefficients for campaigning variables are shown. Standard errors are shown in parentheses.*

A summary of the unstandardized coefficients for each of the canvassing variables is displayed in table 7.10. As previously there is a lack of significant results, which could once again be attributable to the strictness of the model. The coefficient for low level doorstep canvassing campaigns run by Conservative incumbents is not in the expected direction; it appears that such campaigns actually increased Conservative vote share, although not significantly. This could be attributed to the strong local Conservative associations in their safe constituencies which, despite the low level of doorstep canvassing being conducted by the party, guaranteed a certain level of Conservative support. The coefficient for low levels of doorstep canvassing by Conservative opposition candidates is negative, although once again not significant. However, the interactions reveal that the detrimental impact of such campaigns on party vote share increases the safer the constituency, reflecting the findings for campaign spending. The results for low levels of telephone canvassing are a little more promising, with coefficients for both Conservative incumbents and opposition candidates

implying that such levels of campaigning are detrimental to Conservative vote share, although not significantly in either case. Once again, as constituencies become safer, the negative impact of low level campaigns grows.

For Labour, the results for the impact of low level canvassing by opposition candidates on the party's vote share fit more closely with expectations. The coefficients are negative for opposition candidates for both doorstep and telephone canvassing, although once again neither is significant and marginality does not interact with either. For incumbent candidates low levels of doorstep canvassing had a positive but insignificant impact on Labour vote share, no matter the constituency marginality. For incumbent and opposition Liberal Democrat candidates, low level doorstep canvassing led to a reduction (albeit insignificant) in the party's vote share, which was not affected by the interaction of marginality. This is echoed by the findings for the impact of low level telephone canvassing by the party's candidates, with opposition candidates running such campaigns seeing a significant drop of 8.94 percentage points in their vote share.

While the relationship between low levels of campaigning and reductions in vote share is not always as expected, clear trends can be seen in the tables. Firstly, low level campaigning by opposition candidates is more likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on the party's vote share. This fits with the findings of chapter five which made clear that there was a disparity between opposition and incumbent candidate campaigning in safe constituencies, with opposition candidates running much lower level campaigns. Compared to the boosts in vote share seen when examining the continuous measures of campaigning, when low levels of campaigning are identified, they often have a much larger effect on vote share of several percentage points. It would appear that the detrimental impact of low level campaigns is not confined to a single party, with significant negative values for all three parties present. In many cases, the analysis has indicated that low level campaigning in safe constituencies, particularly by opposition candidates, reduces vote share; safe constituencies remain uncompetitive, with opposition parties increasing the gap between themselves and the incumbent party.

Conclusion

With the increasing interest in the effectiveness of intense constituency campaigning, this chapter has explored what happens when parties run comparatively low level campaigns in safer seats. By firstly understanding party vote share and then by exploring reasons for stability and volatility, this chapter has maintained the multivariate model from the previous chapter with slight modifications. This was used to test the relationship between low level campaigns and vote share decline implicitly; the results indicated that campaign spending in particular was effective in raising vote share, so by extension lower levels of campaigning would either increase vote share less or even decrease it.

To measure this explicitly, the measure identifying low levels of campaigning developed in chapter five from an existing measure by Denver et al. (2004) was entered into the model instead. In many cases there is a clear negative relationship, with low level campaigning reducing a party's vote share, particularly when that party is in opposition. Low levels of spending offers a more persuasive case for the detrimental effect of low level campaigning, and there are significant differences once the incumbency position of the candidates is factored in. Compared to the earlier part of the period, low levels of campaign spending by opposition candidates can often reduce party vote share, and this effect is not confined to a single party. Rather, there is a spread of significant results across all parties, although the most significant results can be seen for the Liberal Democrats. Ironically for a party which targets its campaign resources carefully largely out of necessity, the Liberal Democrats suffer the most from spending at low levels. Comparing these results to the findings of chapter six, it would appear that low levels of campaigning have a more harmful impact on vote share than on turnout, with a far higher proportion of significant negative effects observed in the present chapter. The results were clear; low level campaign spending by opposition candidates is often harmful to party vote share. The negative impact is also greatest in the safest constituencies. Parties need to win seats to win elections, and to win a convincing victory they need to be able to win safe constituencies, yet by running low level campaigns, they make the job even more difficult. Campaigning matters; where it is lacking, it can be harmful.

The next chapter introduces a new measure to the study of constituency campaigning in the UK for the first time: leader visits. Such visits are widely publicised and reported, but there has been no extended study into the effect these visits have on constituency outcomes. Using

original data from 2010 it investigates whether leader visits were effective in increasing voter turnout and party vote share, reflecting the dimensions of local electoral outcomes already studied in this thesis.

Chapter 8

Leader Visits at the 2010 General Election

Party leaders in the UK spend much of the short election campaign – at significant cost to campaign finance and campaigning time - travelling around the country visiting constituencies, accompanied by a media and PR entourage. These visits 'almost guarantee extended local and state media coverage' (Holbrook, 2002:60) which can be seen clearly in reports of the 2010 election (see Beckford, 2010). While the potential effectiveness of party leaders during election campaigns encompasses many aspects, from television appearances (Bartels, 1993), to their importance in the campaign (Stevens, Karp and Hodgson, 2011), there has been no study of the impact of visits made by party leaders in boosting constituency results in the UK. This despite some evidence from the United States (Holbrook, 2002) and Canada (Carty and Eagles, 2005; Mintz, 1985) which suggests that such visits are 'a valuable resource for the ground level mobilisation efforts of local organisations and their candidates' (Carty and Eagles, 2005:99) and often boost party vote share. Of course, much electioneering takes place in local constituencies irrespective of whether they are visited by a party leader, and this thesis has explored the impact of spending and canvassing. In contrast, the potential of leader visits to affect local electoral outcomes is largely neglected in the study of local campaigns. During UK election campaigns, only a minority of constituencies are visited, which leads to the question of why party leaders bother visiting at all. Journalists collecting (incomplete) data on leader visits at the 2010 election were only able to conclude that 'there may be sound psephological reasoning behind concentrating on certain areas over others' (Torpey and Sax, 2010), but this chapter is the first to examine leader visits during UK election campaigns in detail.

It begins by situating leader visits within existing literature on campaigning and leadership effects, and explores the studies exploring leader visit effectiveness from Canada and the USA. The frequency of leader visits and the type of visit strategies deployed during the 2010 election campaign are investigated, alongside a typology of constituencies the three leaders visited. Drawing on the existing literature on campaign effectiveness, the chapter develops and tests three hypotheses concerning the effectiveness of leader visits. Echoing the studies conducted in the preceding two chapters of this thesis, this chapter is a case study of the effectiveness of this new campaigning in boosting the two dimensions of local electoral

outcomes used previously (party vote share and voter turnout) by analysing original data collected during the 2010 general election campaign. As such, and in order to ensure that the conclusions of this chapter are comparable to those of the previous two chapters, a common model has been retained; by using this the effectiveness of leader visits in boosting both voter turnout and party vote share both overall is explored.

The political context of leader visits is examined, looking at the influence of incumbency, which as seen in chapter five has a dramatic impact on campaign levels. To examine whether the pattern of leader visits is reflective of a party's electoral strategy (Bélanger, Carty and Eagles, 2003:450), the data will be analysed to uncover both the campaign context (such as the geography and date of the visits) and the political context (which party holds the constituency visited, constituency marginality) of leader visits.

Leader visits and campaigning

Some research indicates that leaders are increasingly important in contemporary elections, due to partisan dealignment, weakening of party resources and growth of the mass media. Although research is limited, what little there is suggests that leaders have an impact on the results, with leader effects in the UK proving 'sufficient to alter the balance of votes by a few percentage points' (Graetz and McAllister, 1987:502), while in 1987 leaders had 'sizable effects' (Stewart and Clarke 1992:447) on vote choice. In the US, campaign appearances by presidential candidates on television have been positively correlated with their resulting vote share (Shaw 1999), whereas campaign events such as conventions and debates, which are deemed to generate interest are credited with moving public opinion polls up to 1.86 percentage points during the 1988 presidential election (Holbrook, 1996). Campaign events, particularly those involving leaders appear to have an effect on election results.

While the existing literature on leader visits is limited to a few studies, there is support for their effectiveness. Mintz (1985), in one of the earliest investigations of leader visit effectiveness found that in the 1972 Canadian election, a visit by a party leader caused an 'above average change in the support level for that party' (Mintz, 1985:53). Likewise, Holbrook suggested in his examination of the whistle-stop presidential campaign of 1948 that 'for every stop [Truman] made in a state he garnered .248 percentage points more of the

vote than would otherwise have been expected' (Holbrook, 2002: 63). Focusing on the 2000 federal election in Canada, Bélanger, Carty and Eagles (2003), found leader visits to be effective in increasing vote share, although this was small, at half a percent or below per visit. In a later, more detailed study of the same election, Carty and Eagles (2005) discovered that leader visits were effective in increasing the vote share for three of the five parties standing. Despite the relative lack of research into leader visits, there is positive evidence from most that leader visits can have a positive effect on party vote share.

Demonstrating the effect of leader visits is one thing. A separate body of work seeks to demonstrate why leader visits might matter. One interpretation comes from the view of campaigns as information campaigns. Leader visits act as a provider of information to the constituency population; not only by those seeing the leader in person, but also reading about it in the press. These visits may act as an endorsement of the local candidate and draw the attention of the population to particular aspects of the local campaign. By providing information (Matsusaka, 1995) on party policies and (implicitly perhaps) on local candidate positions, leader visits lower the cost of participation for potential voters. The heightened attention in the local media to visits can also link the local contest to the national one, bringing local issues to national debates, thereby giving substance to elections for the local electorate. A visit to a constituency can therefore reduce the cost to voters of obtaining information and can make them more likely to vote. Visits are likely to enhance the standing of the local candidate - Carty and Eagles identify in particular the effect of visits by the incumbent Prime Minister visiting a constituency in 'creat[ing] an impression of the local candidate's personal proximity to the Prime Minister' (2005:103-104).

In comparison to vote share, the effectiveness of leader visits upon local turnout has been unstudied despite there being direct theoretical evidence that leader visits, under the remit of local campaigning, can positively affect turnout. Existing research, has provided good empirical evidence that local campaigning is effective in increasing local turnout and that local campaigns are more than the meaningless rituals that Butler and Kavanagh (1988) suggest. Fisher and Denver (2009), for example, examine the effect of campaigning on turnout over the 1992 to 2005 period finding that traditional methods in particular had a positive effect upon turnout. Similarly, Denver and Hands (1997b) in their study of the 1992 election found that campaigning did have an effect, with local campaigning raising turnout by 2.9%. However, despite this evidence linking campaigning and turnout, to date the potential impact of leader visits upon turnout has remained unstudied. This chapter tests

three hypotheses: i) *leader visits boost constituency turnout*, ii) *leader visits boost party vote share* and iii) *visits by governing leaders are less effective than those by opposition leaders*. These hypotheses enable a more holistic picture of the potential effects of leader visits to be formed.

If leader visits have the potential to affect whether people vote and how they vote, then the fact that they have remained relatively unstudied leaves something of a conceptual gap, particularly if they can be classified as elements of campaigning. After all, leader visits certainly fit well into Holbrook's (1996) definition of campaign events alongside conventions and debates, as they are 'directly related to the campaign, generate mass media interest and create a direction of effect (influencing opinion in favour of one candidate*)*. Leader visits can be interpreted as part of the local campaign within the UK context, acting as 'one of the ways in which a party's national campaign can intersect with and reinforce the ground war waged by partisan activists at the grass roots.' (Bélanger et al., 2003:440). Despite the fact that leader visits fit well under the remit of local campaigning, they have been largely neglected in the existing literature, leaving a gap in the understanding of campaigns.

Leader visits can make a difference to both public opinion and party vote share. However, there has been no stand-alone study of the effectiveness of leader visits as part of the local campaign during a UK general election campaign. That the studies conducted in Canada have examined leader visits within a parliamentary system suggests that their techniques may be adapted in the examination of the same phenomena in the UK. The chapter also introduces new elements to the examination of leader visits which represents a real innovation. This study is the first to draw on Carty and Eagles' (2005) research into the spillover effects of leader visits and the model has been adapted to better fit the UK context. The effectiveness of leader visits has also been disaggregated beyond the overall relationship by looking at relative effectiveness according to constituency incumbency and the stage of the campaign at which they are made.

Leader visits in 2010

Notwithstanding the increased attention given by parties and media to leader visits, they remain the exception rather than the rule. While the vast majority of constituencies (78%) were not visited by any of the leaders, 143 constituencies were visited at least once, which makes the study of such visits interesting; when so few seats are visited, there may be common characteristics amongst those that are visited, making it possible to discern visit strategies. Of those constituencies that *were* visited, the vast majority were visited once, 22 were visited twice and a single constituency was visited three times[12].

These figures do not identify which leaders visited the constituencies; looking more closely at the frequency of visits made in table 8.1, all three leaders visited 10% or fewer constituencies during the election campaign. Gordon Brown made the highest proportion of visits, managing 63 over the short campaign, of which three of these were visited twice. David Cameron made slightly fewer visits (56 in total), although he made the highest proportion of repeat visits to six constituencies in total. Nick Clegg made the fewest visits of the leaders at 47 overall (two visited twice).

Table 8.1: Frequency of visits by individual party leaders to constituencies

	David Cameron	Gordon Brown	Nick Clegg
No visit	91.1 (575)	90.0 (568)	92.6 (584)
1 visit	7.9 (50)	9.5 (60)	7.1 (45)
2 visits	1.0 (6)	0.5 (3)	0.3 (2)
Total	100 (631)	100 (631)	100 (631)

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
Note: n in parentheses.

[12] Birmingham Ladywood was the only constituency visited three times during the campaign; twice by David Cameron (on 18th and 29th April) and once by Gordon Brown on 30th April. The seat and its predecessors had been occupied by Claire Short since 1983; she retired prior to the 2010 election. The constituency was an ultra-safe Labour seat with a notional previous majority of 23.23 percentage points and had been in almost continuous occupation by the party sine the Second World War.

The frequency of leader visits is an interesting point to investigate; it is possible that the visits may have some cumulative effect by maintaining local interest in the campaign and confidence in the local candidate, as well as lowering information costs further. Repeated visits to constituencies could be attributed to a variety of factors, such as the marginality of a constituency or fluctuations in local results. Exploring those constituencies that were visited twice (table 8.2), some common themes can be observed. Divided according to census regions, the highest frequency of repeat visits were made to the North West and Greater London; the latter is perhaps unsurprising due to the locational convenience to many media outlets and party headquarters. These seats were also typically held by Labour, with over 82 percent held by the party going into the election, and largely based in large conurbations such as Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, with a mean previous majority of 14.34 percent.

Table 8.2: Number of times each region visited by each party leader

	SE	E	GL	SW	WM	EM	YORK	NW	N	W	S	Total
David Cameron	4 (1)	3 (0)	12 (1)	6 (0)	9 (1)	3 (0)	6 (1)	7 (2)	1 (0)	3 (0)	2 (0)	56
Gordon Brown	8 (0)	6 (0)	13 (2)	4 (0)	10 (0)	5 (0)	5 (0)	7 (1)	2 (0)	1 (0)	2 (0)	63
Nick Clegg	3 (0)	3 (0)	7 (0)	6 (0)	3 (0)	3 (0)	8 (0)	6 (1)	3 (0)	3 (0)	2 (1)	47
Total	15 (1)	12 (0)	32 (3)	16 (0)	22 (1)	11 (0)	19 (0)	20 (4)	6 (0)	7 (0)	6 (1)	166 (10)

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
Note: n of repeated visits in parentheses

David Cameron's repeat visits were predominantly to constituencies in the North West, Yorkshire and the West Midlands, not traditional sources of Conservative support, although he also made two visits to his home constituency (Witney) in the South East. This focus on areas with historically strong support for Labour is also supported by five of the six repeat visits David Cameron made to Labour-held constituencies; indeed if you exclude Witney all his repeated visits were to constituencies held by Labour. Similarly, both repeat visits made by Nick Clegg were to Labour-held constituencies (Glasgow North East and Liverpool

Wavertree). Gordon Brown only made three repeat visits to Hammersmith, Manchester Central and Westminster North, all of which were held by Labour going into the 2010 campaign. Interestingly it was not necessarily the most marginal constituencies that were visited repeatedly; rather the previous majorities of the constituencies visited multiple times by the leaders ranged from 5.05 to 38.36.

Both David Cameron and Gordon Brown appeared to be operating very similar geographic strategies, making the highest proportion of their visits to Greater London (12 and 13 visits respectively), followed by the West Midlands (9 and 10). Nick Clegg on the other hand made the highest proportion of his visits to constituencies in Yorkshire (8), which could be attributed to his representation of a constituency in the county. He made two visits to constituencies in Sheffield (one of which was Sheffield Hallam, his home constituency) although he also made significant numbers of visits to the West Midlands (7), the North West (6) and the South West (6). There was a massive concentration of effort on English constituencies, with all three leaders visiting Scotland twice (albeit in one case Gordon Brown was visiting his home constituency). All three leaders also visited their own constituencies, with Gordon Brown and Nick Clegg (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath and Sheffield Hallam) visiting once, and David Cameron (Witney) visiting twice. This echoes the patterns seen in the constituencies visited twice by the leaders; the areas visited are generally sources of Labour support (although the Liberal Democrats are traditionally strong in the South West).

Carty and Eagles (2005) found that the nationally incumbent Liberals included the entire country in their visit strategy in 2000 while the other parties focussed on specific areas. In the case of the UK in 2010, whilst Gordon Brown (as the incumbent Prime Minister) did indeed make visits to a higher proportion of UK constituencies as a whole, reflecting Carty and Eagles' findings, the two opposing parties also made wide-ranging visits. This more even spread in the data for the UK than Canada is likely to be attributable to the size difference between the two countries– it is far more difficult in terms of resources and time for the Canadian Prime Minister to visit more widespread constituencies.

There were considerable restrictions unique to the 2010 campaign on where the leaders could visit, particularly with the introduction of the leader debates. The Sunday prior to Election Day is also typically restrictive for leader visits due to media commitments in and around London. On these days all party leaders made single visits to constituencies in the same general geographic location as their obligation, so to an extent leaders *were* geographically restricted by the leader debates, but the fact that all three leaders made a single visit on the

day of the campaign implies careful targeting and maximisation of such restrictions rather than a random visit.

It is interesting at this point to consider what exactly were providing the 'dramatic visual backdrops' (Carty and Eagles, 2005:99) for leader visits; to understand what the party leaders were doing in constituencies when they visited, the descriptions of the visits made at the time of data collection were sorted into seven categories ranging from visits to local businesses to charity visits. The visits were then divided according to party leader, with the results shown in table 8.3. There were some difficulties in the codification, for example it was not possible to codify an 'education' category; the purpose of a party leader visiting a school is very different to visiting a university (the main difference being the proportion of voters). While these initial codifications are an interesting subject for future analysis, they were complicated by the majority of visits being dual-purpose.

Table 8.3: Leader visit categories in 2010

	David Cameron	Gordon Brown	Nick Clegg
Business	13 (22.81)	17 (26.98)	8 (17.02)
School	6 (10.53)	6 (9.52)	4 (8.51)
Social/community services	3 (5.2)	7 (11.11)	2 (4.26)
Charity visit/event	2 (3.51)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Healthcare services	6 (10.53)	1 (1.59)	3 (6.38)
Further education	5 (8.77)	4 (6.35)	7 (14.89)
Meet and greet	2 (3.51)	8 (12.70)	1 (2.13)
Other	19 (35.09)	20 (31.75)	22 (46.81)
Total	56	63	47

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630. Note: % of each leaders visits indicated by each category in parentheses.

For all three parties, visits to business premises represented the highest proportion of visits with a single category allocation, comprising at least 17.02% of each leader's visits to all constituencies. Some of these were local businesses (Nick Clegg made a visit to a small business in Bradford East on 13th April) whereas others were local sites of national companies (on 7th April Gordon Brown visited the headquarters of Innocent Smoothies in Hammersmith). For David Cameron, visits to school and healthcare services comprised the next largest percentage at 10.53%, followed by further education. However, the three next

largest proportions of Labour's visits after business are completely different – meet and greets comprising 12.70%, followed by visits to social services and schools. Nick Clegg's second most common visit type was to Further Education institutions which made up 14.89% of his allocated visit total, drawing on the growth of Liberal Democrat popularity amongst university students due to their pledge to the National Union of Students to oppose tuition fee increases. Despite all subsequently elected Liberal Democrat MPs signing the pledge, it was abandoned within months of the Coalition (Prince and Porter, 2010). The link between the pledge and motivations to visit universities during the election campaign was drawn by Harriet Harman MP who accused Nick Clegg of 'hawk[ing] himself around university campuses pledging to vote against tuition fees. By the time Freshers' week was over, he had broken his promise' (Hansard, 2010).

Placing leader visits in political context

While the analysis so far has given some indications in regards to the frequency and geography of leader visits during the 2010 campaign, this section considers the political context of leader visits. An examination will be made of the frequency of visits by party leaders according to the stage of the campaign, disaggregating the data both daily and weekly. The relationship between constituency marginality and the likelihood of a visit will be examined with the expectation that marginal constituencies are most likely to be visited by leaders. The incumbency and battleground status of seats visited is also explored to contrast the differing campaign strategies of the three parties.

Campaign stage

The date of each visit was recorded during data collection, making it simple to identify the point in the campaign each visit was made, with table 8.4 disaggregating the data on a weekly basis. Instead of counting weeks from the date that campaigning commenced, full calendar weeks have been followed for simplicity. Therefore, the short campaign comprised five calendar weeks, with the first week of campaigning ran from Tuesday 6th April to Sunday 11th April.

Table 8.4: Weekly frequency of visits by leader during campaign

	David Cameron	Gordon Brown	Nick Clegg	Total
Week 1	10	8	8	26
Week 2	12	12	11	35
Week 3	10	11	8	29
Week 4	11	14	9	34
Week 5	13	18	11	42
Total	56	63	47	166

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N=630

Three full weeks followed before a fifth three-day campaigning week prior to Election Day on Thursday 5th May. By examining the stage of the campaign at which visits are made, a sense can be gained of the growing momentum of the campaign towards the final week of campaigning. A heavy concentration of visits by all three leaders in the final three-day week of campaigning can be seen, with David Cameron making visits to six constituencies in the North of England and the Midlands the day prior to Polling Day alone; his highest daily frequency of the campaign. Interestingly, the most visits made by all three leaders during one day of campaigning (15 in total) were made on the Sunday prior to Election Day, with Gordon Brown making nine visits to London constituencies. This is likely to be due to the restrictions imposed by the round of the media outlets (based in London) on this day.

David Cameron and Gordon Brown visited at least one constituency on every day of the short campaign, while Nick Clegg made visits on all but four days (three of which were at weekends), which indicates the importance of leader visits for parties. The frequency of visits for all three leaders peaked in the fifth week, with Gordon Brown visiting the most (18, compared to 13 for David Cameron and 11 for Nick Clegg). Whilst the range of visits over the first four weeks of campaigning is nine, the more intense campaigning of the final three-day week increases the range to 16. In the final week, 42 visits were made by the party leaders between the 3rd and 5th of May alone.

Marginality and leader visits

Marginality is central in this thesis, with parties increasingly targeting their resources towards marginal constituencies. In considering leader visits as an alternative operationalisation of campaigning, the likelihood of a constituency being visited by the leaders would also be expected to be significantly related to constituency marginality. The concentration on marginal constituencies persisted during the 2010 campaign, with Fisher,

Cutts and Fieldhouse (2011) finding a clear link between marginality and levels of campaigning. Marginality is also linked to leader effects, with Shachar and Nalebuff (1999) observing that a single percentage point increase in closeness increases efforts made by leaders.

Carty and Eagles (2005) drew initial links between marginality and leader visits, finding that the three longest established Canadian parties at the 2000 election were most likely to visit safer constituencies, whereas the only party that visited a higher proportion of marginal constituencies (Bloc Quebecois) did badly in the results. Holbrook's research into Truman's campaign (2002:62) also discovered that closeness held for both Dewey and Truman's visits. Following this existing evidence, and coupled with the wider literature on the association between campaigning and marginality, leaders should be more likely to visit marginal constituencies. A cross tabulation was produced (table 8.5) between the five categories of marginality and a binary variable for each leader indicating if they had visited a constituency. The binary leader visit variable did not, of course, account for multiple visits, only indicating that the constituency had been visited at least once during the campaign.

Table 8.5: Leader visits across five categories of marginality

	Ultra-Marginal	Fairly Marginal	Fairly Safe	Very Safe	Ultra-Safe	Total
David Cameron	5 (8.9)	12 (21.4)	14 (25.0)	11 (19.6)	14 (25.0)	56
Gordon Brown	18 (28.6)	14 (22.2)	8 (12.7)	11 (17.5)	12 (19.0)	63
Nick Clegg	10 (21.3)	14 (29.8)	6 (12.8)	9 (19.1)	8 (17.0)	47
Total	33	40	28	31	33	

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N=630
Note: figures refer to n of visits with percentage of leader's visits in parentheses.

If the expectation that leaders were more likely to visit marginal constituencies is to be confirmed, a concentration of visits by the party leaders in the ultra-marginal and fairly marginal categories should be observable. The table roughly supports this relationship, but David Cameron visited comparatively few ultra-marginal constituencies. It also reveals that the two categories of constituency representing the largest proportion of his leader visits (50% in total) were made to fairly safe (those with majorities of 10 to 14.99%) and ultra-safe constituencies (majorities of 20% and above). This does not appear to support the hypothesised relationship between marginality and visit likelihood, especially as his lowest

proportion of visits (8.9% of the total) were made to ultra-marginal constituencies where the highest figures might have been expected. The relationship does appear to be supported for Gordon Brown and Nick Clegg, as for each leader their highest proportions of visits were found in ultra-marginal and fairly marginal seats. Whereas Gordon Brown paid most his visits (28.6%) to ultra-marginal constituencies, Nick Clegg made the highest proportion of his visits (29.8%) to fairly marginal constituencies.

While the table offers mixed support for the association between marginality and leader visits, to examine whether these differences were significant, four independent sample t-tests were conducted, with the results shown in table 8.6.

Table 8.6: T-test results comparing previous majority with leader visits

	Visit	No visit	T	df
David Cameron	14.97 (8.10)	19.28 (12.65)	3.582**	83.781
Gordon Brown	12.75 (11.07)	19.58 (12.33)	4.215**	629
Nick Clegg	12.91 (10.33)	19.38 (12.41)	3.477**	629
Any leader	13.64 (10.11)	20.43 (12.56)	6.643**	279.480

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N=630

The grouping variables were the binary variables indicating visits by party leaders, as well as a binary variable measuring whether *any* leader had visited; the test variable in each case was the constituency majority at the previous election. In every scenario, the previous majority varied significantly between constituencies visited by the leaders and those that were not visited. In all cases the direction of this significant difference was as expected, with visited constituencies having a significantly lower average previous majority than those not visited. Even the non-party specific measure of whether a constituency was visited by any leader has highly significantly different means. The results include the leader's visits to their home constituencies, all of which are safe, with majorities of 27.68% (Witney), 43.5% (Cowdenbeath and Kilmarnock) and 16.17% (Sheffield Hallam); interestingly, for those constituencies visited, the standard deviations of the means were smaller than for those constituencies not visited. The results are remarkably similar between the parties, with the mean previous majority of constituencies visited ranging from 12.75 (for Labour) to 14.97 (for the Conservatives); for those constituencies not visited the mean previous majorities are even closer, ranging from 19.28 to 19.58. It would therefore appear that constituency marginality is significantly related to visit likelihood, with constituencies receiving visits having significantly lower previous majorities than those not visited.

Defensive and offensive targeting

Canadian party leaders typically visited constituencies that they already held (Carty and Eagles, 2005); the one party (Bloc Quebecois) that did not do so at the 2000 election did badly. Defensive and offensive leader visits can be identified according to constituency incumbency, with defensive visits counted as those in which the constituency was held by their own party, and offensive visits as those not held by that leader's party. Applying this to the 2010 UK election, a defensive strategy might be expected from Labour, with the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats adopting offensive strategies to gain seats and thereby gain power. To explore this, a crosstab between party incumbency going into the 2010 campaign (based on either actual or notional results) and visits made by the three leaders was conducted, with the results in table 8.7.

Table 8.7: Leader visits divided according to party holding the constituency

	Conservative constituencies	Labour constituencies	Liberal Democrat constituencies	Other constituencies	Total visits
David Cameron	8.93 (5)	80.36 (45)	10.71 (6)	0	56
Gordon Brown	7.94 (5)	87.30 (55)	3.17 (2)	1.59 (1)	63
Nick Clegg	14.89 (7)	59.57 (28)	25.53 (12)	0	47

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N=630
Note: figures refer to percentage of leader's visits with n in parentheses.

These strategies are confirmed by the results, with the Conservatives operating a clearly offensive visit strategy to constituencies held by other parties (91.07% of David Cameron's total visits). Of these visits, 80.36% were to Labour-held constituencies. An offensive strategy is also evident on the part of the Liberal Democrats, albeit on a slightly lesser scale. Nick Clegg visited seats where the Liberal Democrats were not the incumbents for 74.16% of his visits. A striking contrast can be seen for Gordon Brown, who visited Labour-held seats for 87.30% of all his visits, indicating a clear defensive strategy. Clearly an offensive strategy is less possible for the leader of a party with a large majority. Of the three party

leaders, Gordon Brown was the only leader to visit a constituency held by a minor party; this was his visit to Bethnal Green & Bow which was held by George Galloway for Respect.

Battleground visits

The analyses into the local political context and leader visits so far has demonstrated that defensive and offensive strategies can easily be discerned from the data and that the lower the percentage majority going into the 2010 election, the more likely a constituency was to be visited. To look in more detail at the local political context of constituencies visited by party leaders, the data have been codified according to their battleground status; enabling the identification of the parties in first and second place. Battleground constituencies are marginal seats (Gimpel, Kaufmann and Pearson-Merkowitz, 2007); the key difference between the two classifications is that battleground seats detail which parties are in contention, whereas marginal constituencies quantify the distance between the two. Although these data had been included in the dataset covering 1992 to 2005 (Norris 2009) that formed the basis for the dataset constructed for this thesis, the later dataset covering 2010 (Norris 2010) did not; therefore battleground codification was added in. To explore types of battle (or competition) in constituencies visited in 2010, a cross tabulation was run against the binary variable codifying whether each leader had visited the constituency or not.

Table 8.8: Battleground status of constituencies and leader visits

	David Cameron		**Gordon Brown**		**Nick Clegg**	
	No visit	*Visit*	*No visit*	*Visit*	*No visit*	*Visit*
Con/Lab	25	0	24	1	25	0
Con/LD	15	0	15	0	11	4
Lab/Con	44	14	38	20	58	0
Lab/LD	5	0	3	2	1	4
LD/Con	13	2	15	0	12	3
LD/Lab	7	0	6	1	5	2
3 way marginal	39	1	33	7	29	11
Other	5	0	4	1	5	0
Safe	422	39	430	31	584	23

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N=630
Note: figures refer to percentage of leader's visits with n in parentheses.

By enabling us to identify parties in second place, these results offer more detail than table 8.7. Looking firstly at David Cameron's visits, the offensive strategy can still clearly be seen. The highest number of visits made by David Cameron to battleground constituencies were to Labour seats where the Conservatives were in second place, followed by

constituencies where the Conservatives were second to the Liberal Democrats. The Conservatives also concentrated their efforts on safer constituencies, with David Cameron visiting the highest proportion out of the three leaders, indicating an expansionist strategy – to gain enough seats for a parliamentary majority it was vital that the Conservatives could gain safer constituencies. As indicated previously, a markedly different strategy can be seen in Gordon Brown's visits; he made the highest number of visits to Labour-held seats where the Conservatives were in second place, echoing David Cameron's concentration on this seat type, but from a defensive instead of an offensive position. Of the 22 Labour-held marginal constituencies visited by Gordon Brown, 20 of those were where the Conservatives were in second place, indicating that the threat posed by the Conservatives was perceived of as greater than that of the Liberal Democrats. The battleground status of seat most likely to be visited by Nick Clegg were three-way marginal constituencies; equally with four visits each were constituencies where the Liberal Democrats were in second place to both Labour and the Conservatives. The only other constituency type that was visited were Liberal Democrat-held marginal constituencies; the spread of visits across battlegrounds is also markedly more even than for the other parties.

Not all constituencies are visited, and this section has explored key characteristics of those that were. While visit frequency remains fairly constant throughout much of the campaign, there is a distinct increase over the final weekend and last week of the short campaign; Gordon Brown visited nine (geographically close) constituencies in a single day alone! Visited constituencies were also significantly more marginal than those which were not visited. Strategies can be seen in the pattern of visits, with David Cameron and Nick Clegg concentrating the majority of their visits on constituencies held by other parties, whereas Gordon Brown operated a distinctively defensive strategy, concentrating largely on Labour-held seats. So far, the new data collected has enabled the first detailed picture of leader visits made during an election campaign in the UK to be created; however the data do not yet tell us anything about whether leader visits are effective, if at all. This requires the use of a model incorporating the data on leader visits alongside other variables.

The effectiveness of leader visits

Leader visits are widely reported in the media, whether national or local, during the election campaign and it is via this exposure that leader visits, like the other forms of campaigning

explored so far in this thesis, have the potential to have an effect on constituency outcomes. This reporting, particularly in the local media, increases the amount of information provided to voters in the constituency by the campaign, enabling undecided voters to vote and mobilising existing supporters. While the limited existing literature has concentrated solely on the impact of visits by party leaders upon their party's vote shares, this chapter reflects the dual dimensions of local electoral outcomes used in this thesis by also considering the potential impact of leader visits on boosting constituency turnout. This section models and tests the impact of leader visits in raising both vote share and turnout; as leader visits are here being presented as an addition to existing measures of campaigning, their effect on these two variables will be modelled in the same way as in the previous two chapters.

Data on leader visits during the 2010 campaigns were collected at the constituency level, which provides a detailed view of where the leaders have visited, but disperses the data more widely than if examining visits per county or region. This means that, as seen in table 8.1, during the 2010 general election only 22% of constituencies were visited at all, and the vast majority of those that were visited were only visited once: the data are not distributed normally. To counter this skew, binary measures indicating whether each of the three leaders had visited a constituency were used. These are the independent variables of the model, with measures of both vote share and turnout as the dependent variables. Here the multivariate models created in the previous two chapters are brought together; by retaining these models leader visits are treated in the same way as the spending and activity measures used previously in this thesis, making the results comparable.

As a reminder, the model contains two sets of variables which have links to variations in both vote share and turnout; one set controlling for the political context in constituencies, and the other controlling for the social context. The first control is constituency marginality, to isolate the impact of the visits from the independent effect of marginality on the dependent variable. The second control variable is a continuous measure of the career tenure of the local incumbent. The third control is an interaction term between leader visits and marginality, and the fourth is a previous measure of the dependent variable. Four socio-demographic variables were also included to control for the proportion of retired people in the constituency, the percentage of owner occupiers, routine workers and migrants; all of which were found to be significantly associated with levels of the two dependent variables.

One slight modification was made to the models used in previous chapters by including a control for average campaign spend in the constituency to isolate the effect of leader visits from the rest of the campaign. There is good evidence (see chapter seven) that party expenditure at the constituency level is effective in increasing party vote share. However, no existing studies of leader visits include any additional measures of campaigning other than the visit variable. Although there are many shortcomings in the sole application of campaign spending (see Gordon and Whiteley 1980 for an account), it is the only measure of campaigning available for the 2010 election that can be attributed to specific constituencies. A measure of the average spend by the three main parties was entered into the equations to control for other campaign activity, as if party spending is positively related to party vote share, then it follows that it can depress the vote share of other parties. The appropriateness of including the average spend control instead of spending measures specific to parties was tested by two pilot models; in all three cases, the model which incorporated the average spending measure had higher adjusted r-square figures. An interaction term between average spend and marginality was also controlled for, as per the previous models.

The effectiveness of leader visits in boosting constituency turnout was explored by running the regressions with turnout at the 2010 election as the dependent variable, and three binary measures (one for each of the three individual leaders) as the independent variables (run together to control for the effects of visits made by other leaders), controlling for the political and social context. For the vote share models run for each party, the dependent variable became the 2010 vote shares for that party and the control variables were re-entered into the equation. In the place of previous turnout a specific control for the notional or actual vote share for the party under examination at the 2005 election was entered. The results of the four models summarised in table 8.9 indicate a good explanatory power for all three leaders in both turnout (85.1%) and vote share (83.7%-94.8%). None of the binary leader visit variables boost constituency turnout when controlling for all other factors; indeed the unstandardized coefficients for visits made by all three leaders are negative. These results would appear to reject the hypothesis that leader visits, even those made by the national opposition leaders have a positive effect on voter turnout. David Cameron's visits had the greatest negative impact in ultra-marginal constituencies: of those he visited, all were held by Labour. In contrast, Gordon Brown's visits reduced turnout most in ultra-safe constituencies, which were held almost exclusively by his own party. Of the three leaders, Nick Clegg's visits reduced turnout the least, yet in constituencies where the previous majority was between 10 and 14.99 percentage points, his visits saw a steep fall in turnout.

Table 8.9: The effectiveness of leader visits in boosting vote share and turnout

	Turnout change	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Marginality	.015 (.020)	-.044 (.032)	-.035 (.049)	-.019 (.040)
David Cameron visit	-.366 (.307)	1.495** (.474)	-.390 (.714)	-2.143** (.605)
Gordon Brown visit	-.290 (.302)	.356 (.466)	.341 (.710)	-.929 (.597)
Nick Clegg visit	-.238 (.351)	-.639 (.554)	-.061 (.818)	2.667** (.712)
Average spend	.031** (.010)	.006 (.015)	-.009 (.023)	.009 (.019)
Career tenure	-.013 (.010)	.003 (.015)	.011 (.023)	-.014 (.019)
Marginality/spend interaction	-.001 (.000)	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Owner	.071** (.013)	.043* (.021)	-.326** (.028)	.117** (.023)
Retired	-.168** (.042)	-.124* (.062)	.025 (.098)	.076 (.081)
Routine	-.440** (.037)	.199** (.059)	-.513** (.092)	.117 (.071)
Migrants	-.157** (.037)	.001 (.057)	-.482** (.087)	.427** (.074)
Previous turnout/vote share	.614** (.022)	1.004** (.014)	.932** (.020)	.842** (.019)
Adjusted r^2	.851	.948	.902	.837

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

The table also shows the unstandardized coefficients for the regressions between party leader visits and the effect they have on their party's vote share at the 2010 general election, controlling for visits made by other leaders. As hypothesised, the relationship between a party's leader visiting the constituency during the campaign and that party's 2010 vote share is positive for all three parties, although only significant for the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

For the Conservatives, in a constituency visited by David Cameron, the party's vote share increased 1.49 percentage points, a significant rise against those constituencies which were not visited. This increase was particularly steep in ultra-safe constituencies. In seats visited

by David Cameron, not only did the Conservatives see a boost in their vote share, but there was a significant reduction in Liberal Democrat vote share of 2.14 percentage points, particularly when the seat was ultra-marginal.

The Liberal Democrats received a significant boost to their vote share from Nick Clegg's visits of 2.67 percentage points, and the coefficients for other parties indicate that his visits also reduced vote share for both the Conservative and Labour in these constituencies, although neither is significant. The boost in Liberal Democrat vote share was not consistent across constituency marginalities, however, and was far lower in constituencies with majorities of 20 percentage points and above. Despite the coefficient for the impact of Gordon Brown's visits on Labour vote share being positive (although far smaller than that for the two other leaders) the value was not significant. The positive impact of his visits grew the safer constituencies became, although this reduced once the previous majority of a constituency had risen above 20 percentage points. His visits fractionally increased Conservative vote share, but depressed Liberal Democrat vote share, although neither value is significant. It would appear from these results that leader visits were indeed effective in increasing party vote share – as long as you were not Gordon Brown.

Leader visits and neighbouring constituencies

It is possible that leader visits also have an impact outside a constituency's boundary. Carty and Eagles (2005) argue that the impact of leader visits to urban ridings has a spillover effect into neighbouring (adjacent) ridings (the Canadian equivalent of constituencies). When a party leader had visited a riding, they recorded 0.5 of a visit to the neighbouring ridings as more than one riding 'is likely to feel the impact of the resulting media coverage' (Carty and Eagles, 2005:103). However, they did not analyse these data in detail. As such, data on leader visit spillover in the UK were collected for the 2010 election, but this time they have been tested in a multivariate model to examine their impact on party vote share. Each visit to a neighbouring constituency was registered as 0.5; these constituencies were identified using the interactive map available on the BBC Constituency Finder (BBC, 2010b), and cumulative scores were calculated for individual leaders.

Rather than limiting spillover to neighbouring urban constituencies as Carty and Eagles do, spillover scores for both rural and urban constituencies have been calculated. This is because

the UK is small in comparison to Canada, and therefore the potential reach of spillover to neighbouring constituencies in rural areas is likely to be far greater. To examine the effectiveness of leader visit spillover in boosting vote share in neighbouring constituencies, the model used in table 8.9 was rerun, this time with the continuous measure of the cumulative visit spillover by each leader as the independent variable.

Table 8.10: The effectiveness of leader visits in boosting vote share in neighbouring constituencies

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Marginality	-.049 (.032)	-.048 (.047)	.013 (.040)
David Cameron spillover	.761* (.339)	-.373 (.500)	.291 (.436)
Gordon Brown spillover	-.039 (.349)	-2.013** (.514)	.899* (.449)
Nick Clegg spillover	.157 (.448)	-.356 (.659)	.521 (.577)
Average spend	.005 (.015)	-.014 (.022)	.020 (.019)
Career tenure	.004 (.015)	.017 (.022)	-.025 (.020)
Marginality/spend interaction	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Owner	.042* (.021)	-.345** (.028)	.137** (.024)
Retired	-.132* (.063)	-.027 (.097)	.121 (.083)
Routine	.221** (.060)	-.584** (.093)	.157* (.073)
Migrants	.004 (.057)	-.524** (.085)	.472** (.075)
Previous vote share	1.007** (.014)	.941** (.019)	.868** (.019)
Adjusted r2	.948	.905	.832

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

David Cameron's visits had a significant impact on Conservative vote share in neighbouring constituencies even when controlling for spillover visits by other leaders. The coefficients in table 8.10 reveal that for every visit made by David Cameron, the Conservatives received a significant boost of .761 percentage points to their vote share. His visits also boosted Liberal Democrat vote share and reduced Labour vote share in neighbouring constituencies, but not

significantly. It is interesting to note that the coefficient for David Cameron's spillover visits is a dampening of the coefficient measuring the direct impact of leader visits in table 8.9. It is possible that this is a result of counting the visits as 0.5, or that the effect is actually halved.

In contrast to table 8.9, Gordon Brown's visits do not reflect the pattern seen in the direct measure. While visits by Gordon Brown made no significant impact on Conservative vote share in neighbouring constituencies, the results in table 8.10 indicate that his visits significantly reduced Labour vote share in these constituencies. For every spillover visit recorded, Labour vote share in neighbouring constituencies dropped by 2.01 percentage points. It is possible that this is an effect of which parties were holding the constituencies; if neighbouring constituencies to Gordon Brown's visits tended to be Conservative-held this could explain the drop. In total, 73 Conservative constituencies recorded at least one neighbouring visit from Gordon Brown, with one constituency having three. In contrast, Labour held 140 neighbouring constituencies to Gordon Brown's visits, a factor enhanced by Gordon Brown's visits being made largely to urban constituencies with plenty of opportunity of spillover. Possibly the Labour leader's visits just did not travel well. Visits by Gordon Brown also boosted Liberal Democrat vote share in neighbouring constituencies with a single visit leading to a rise of .899 percentage points. Surprisingly, considering the significant impact Nick Clegg's visits had on vote share in constituencies visited, his visits had no significant impact on any party's vote share in neighbouring constituencies.

As this is the first time that the impact of leader visits in neighbouring constituencies has been examined, there are a few issues in regards to these conclusions. Firstly, visit spillover may not be neatly confined to adjacent constituencies; Carty and Eagles collected data on visit spillover in relation to the potential of *media coverage* in neighbouring constituencies. As a modification, perhaps the geography of visit spillover in the UK should be based on the coverage of local media (regional news, local newspapers etc.). Also, the allocation of 0.5 to spillover constituencies seems a little arbitrary; it assumes that a visit to a neighbouring constituency has half of the effect of a constituency visit; in reality the impact of spillover may vary. The concept of campaign spillover and how far it extends is difficult and requires further study; however as an initial investigation into its potential impact these results do appear to indicate some significant effects.

The effectiveness of differing campaign strategies

The data on leader visits have so far demonstrated that the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats conducted offensive leader visit campaigns, in comparison to the more defensive strategy adopted by Gordon Brown. These differing strategies were of course necessitated by the different national positions of each party – Labour were the nationally incumbent party holding the greatest number of constituencies, whereas the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats needed to conduct a more offensive campaign to place themselves closer to power. By isolating the incumbency of constituencies visited according to which party held the seat going into the 2010 campaign (notional figures were used where boundary changes had applied), the relative effectiveness of these strategies can be contrasted.

The same controls as used in testing the overall effectiveness of leader visits were re-entered into the regression, with the unstandardized coefficients for the leader visit variables and the adjusted r^2 figures for each model represented in table 8.11. Some caution should be taken in reading the results as splitting the data according to incumbency reduces the *n* for each regression. As such, the margin of error is increased, particularly in the case of the Liberal Democrats, who held 62 constituencies prior to the 2010 election. In constituencies held by the Conservatives, visits made by both David Cameron and Gordon Brown boosted Conservative vote share, although neither was significant. This implies that in such constituencies, Gordon Brown's visits may have helped to consolidate Conservative support in reaction. This is reflected by the impact of visits to Conservative constituencies on Labour vote share. Once again, when David Cameron visited these constituencies, the Labour vote share increased, albeit insignificantly. Nick Clegg's visits to these seats indicate that his visits significantly reduced Conservative vote share. The effect of visits on Liberal Democrat vote share in these seats is interesting. When David Cameron visited a Conservative-held constituency, he significantly reduced Liberal Democrat vote share by 3.57 percentage points, whereas Nick Clegg significantly boosted his own support in Conservative-held seats by 4.35 percentage points.

Table 8.11: Leader visit coefficients for linear regression model examining the effectiveness of leader visits in different incumbency contexts (full results in Appendix 17)

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Conservative-held			
David Cameron	.602 (1.493)	1.688 (1.392)	-3.566*(1.647)
Gordon Brown	.736 (1.517)	1.386 (1.410)	-2.659 (1.653)
Nick Clegg	-2.463 (1.295)	-.961 (1.236)	4.350** (1.453)
Adjusted r^2	.617	.837	.781
Labour-held			
David Cameron	1.598** (.488)	-1.093 (.808)	-1.294* (.617)
Gordon Brown	.602 (.464)	-.007 (.784)	.021 (.586)
Nick Clegg	-1.048 (.718)	.179 (1.102)	3.632** (.913)
Adjusted r^2	.929	.701	.693
Liberal Democrat-held			
David Cameron	2.149 (2.210)	.917 (1.297)	-2.766 (2.700)
Gordon Brown	.812 (3.601)	-.737 (2.059)	-.375 (4.392)
Nick Clegg	.339 (1.904)	-.810 (1,088)	.564 (2.344)
Adjusted r^2	.835	.944	.204

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients for the selected variables only with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

In Labour-held constituencies, David Cameron's visits significantly boosted Conservative vote share by 1.6 percentage points, whereas Nick Clegg's visits significantly boosted his party's vote share by 3.62 percentage points. Once again there is evidence of David Cameron's visit effectiveness coming at the expense of Liberal Democrat vote share, with his visits to Labour-held constituencies significantly reducing Liberal Democrat vote share by 1.29 percentage points. Unluckily for Gordon Brown, visits to constituencies held by his own party not only made no significantly difference to his party's vote share, but the coefficient is slightly negative.

Lastly, looking at the effectiveness of leader visits in Liberal Democrat-held constituencies, no party leader's visits had a significant impact on any party's vote share. Nick Clegg's visits to his own constituencies, like the other two party leaders, did not significantly boost the party's vote share. This lack of significant results for visits to constituencies already held by the leader's parties is interesting and suggests that defensive campaign visits are less effective. Unfortunately for Gordon Brown, the majority of his visits were to Labour-held constituencies, which might help explain why his visits have had an insignificant effect throughout this chapter. In contrast, visiting constituencies held by other parties not only boosts the visiting leader's vote share, it can also help to decrease the vote share of other parties. Of the three parties, the Liberal Democrats ran the most effective leader visit strategy in terms of raising vote share. A visit by Nick Clegg to Conservative and Labour-held constituencies raised Liberal Democrat vote share by between 3.6 and 4.3 percentage points respectively. David Cameron's visits proved to be significant in raising Conservative vote share only in Labour-held constituencies, with a visit increasing Conservative vote share by 1.59 percentage points. However, even in Labour-held constituencies, visits by David Cameron were not as effective in raising vote share as Nick Clegg's visits[13].

Conclusion

Leaders have become an important element of modern election campaigns in the UK, perhaps increasingly so with the adoption of leader debates. They make often highly-publicised visits to constituencies throughout the election campaign, and this study is the first to use substantial data to explore the impact of such visits in the UK, taking cues from existing research in Canada and the USA. Most constituencies are not visited at all, while those that are visited are typically more marginal and visits increase in frequency as Election Day draws closer. The patterns of leader visits reveal distinctive strategies, with Labour adopting a defensive pattern of visits while the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats made the majority of their visits to constituencies held by other parties. Exploring the effectiveness of leader visits on boosting both turnout and vote share, the results were mixed, with visits

[13] Two further disaggregations of leader visit effectiveness were also investigated: their effectiveness according to the marginality of the constituency and the stage of the campaign when the visits were made. Very few significant results were observed, so the analysis was excluded from this chapter.

making no significant impact on constituency turnout, but visits by David Cameron and Nick Clegg significantly boosting their respective party vote shares.

Disaggregating the leader visits according to the local incumbent party, the results have demonstrated that electoral rewards for these parties came from their visits to Labour-held constituencies. Offensive visits appear to be more effective than Labour's defensive strategy, although it should be taken into account that even if Labour had adopted an offensive pattern of leader visits, it is questionable whether Labour would have reaped the same rewards; a matter which would require further testing in a range of circumstances. Nevertheless there is a great deal of scope for the future study of leader visit effectiveness, not only in Westminster elections, but also in the devolved institutions of the UK.

This is only the first substantial investigation into the effectiveness of leader visits on local electoral outcomes in the UK and offers plenty of scope for future research. This analysis has the potential to be repeated during future election campaigns and to be expanded to incorporate other party leaders. It would be interesting to incorporate Plaid Cymru and the SNP into the general election analysis (controlling of course for where they stand), but there is also potential to explore the effectiveness of leader visits in elections to the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament elections.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This thesis has explored whether low levels of campaigning in safe constituencies had a harmful effect on local electoral outcomes between 1987 and 2010. Intense campaigning in marginal constituencies has a positive effect on turnout and vote share. This can be extended to examine whether less intense campaigns have a harmful impact. The first of three sub-hypotheses engaged with marginality, drawing on two alternate arguments explaining its origin; looking firstly at the role of class support, and secondly at population stability. The second hypothesis considered the role of marginality in affecting levels of campaigning; as part of this question a new way of measuring relative levels of campaigning was developed. The final sub-hypothesis considered the impact that low levels of local campaigning had on local electoral outcomes, which also measured the effects of a new campaigning variable. By considering the implication of party leader visits for the first time in the UK, the thesis makes a clear and complementary contribution to the existing literature.

This conclusion considers the findings of the analysis contained in the previous chapters, concentrating on the contributions made in understanding marginality as a concept, drawing a link between marginality and campaigning, and providing an alternate view of the impact of low level constituency campaigns. All analysis is considered within the theoretical and empirical literature, as introduced in chapter two. The chapter ends by reflecting upon key avenues for future research.

Summary of key findings

Class offers a better explanation of the origins of marginality than population stability

Marginality is an increasingly important concept in studies of British elections, with parties, the media and researchers being drawn to marginal constituencies. In rational choice theories of voter behaviour, marginality is an important concept affecting the cost and benefit

calculations associated with voting. As Downs (1957) explores in the key study of rational choice theories of voter behaviour, marginality plays an important role in the voting decision by affecting the likelihood of casting the crucial vote. It is a source of variety in constituencies, and the investigation of the first sub-hypothesis in chapter four engages with the causes of such variation. While the origins of marginality have been hinted at in existing research (Denver, Hands and McAllister 2003), this thesis creates a substantive examination of the concept originating from population characteristics.

Drawing on two theoretical explanations linking social groups and marginality, chapter four investigated the first sub-hypothesis of this thesis, breaking it down into two nested hypotheses which examine the role of i) traditional party support bases and ii) population stability as explanatory factors for marginality. Beginning with theories of party support, the chapter argued that constituency marginality relied upon the proportion of social groups with traditional ties to particular parties. The most immediate tie between social groups and political parties in the UK is class, which despite a degree of partisan dealignment of the 1960s onwards (Franklin, 1985), continues to remain an important explanatory variable in UK voter behaviour. The clearest ties are between routine workers and Labour, and professional workers and support for the Conservatives. By arguing that higher proportions of these groups result in safer constituencies for the respective parties, this chapter clearly links population characteristics and marginality. The chapter compared traditional occupational measures of class and the proportion of owner-occupiers to support for the three largest parties over the entire 1987 to 2010 period. The results indicated that traditional bases of class support are important explanatory factors in determining constituency marginality. While the hypothesis works well for the Conservatives and Labour, it is less powerful for the Liberal Democrats. As an alternative, the chapter applies Putnam's (1966) theory of population stability to investigate whether stability of the local population is a key determinant of marginality. The link between the two concepts is appealing; marginality is fundamentally based on the likelihood of (seat) change, with clear indications that marginal seats were significantly more likely to change hands than safer constituencies. Where the local population is unstable it is less possible to build up strong sources of support for parties, making a constituency more likely to be marginal.

In practice, there is a clear mismatch between this intuitively appealing application of Putnam's theory to the UK context, as the sources of stability clash with party support in the UK. Particularly problematic is the inclusion of the proportion of owner occupiers as an indicator of stability; the argument being that this group have invested in the constituency

and are less likely to move than those who rent. Yet this clashes with the findings of the previous hypothesis examining class indicators as the origins of marginality: owner occupiers were significantly associated with lower levels of support for Labour. However, the party has consistently held very safe constituencies; including the safest constituency at all six elections. There is also a fundamental question raised in equating safe constituencies with stability; as chapter four demonstrated, even in seats where there have been no boundary changes, marginality changes often.

Of these two potential explanations for the origins of constituency marginality, the presence of traditional bases of party support offers a more convincing foundation than population stability in the UK. Safe Conservative constituencies have higher portions of professionals, whereas safe Labour constituencies are more likely to have higher proportions of routine workers. Yet despite socio-demographics explaining elements of marginality, they offer only a partial picture of why some constituencies are marginal. Understanding why some constituencies are more or less marginal than others is important in understanding not only how their marginality may evolve, but also how best to campaign in them.

Safe constituencies see lower levels of campaigning, with incumbency playing a central role

Exploring the hypothesis that constituency marginality affects the level of campaigning in a constituency, chapter five argues that the two are clearly linked, with measurably lower levels of campaigning in safe constituencies This echoes and extends existing literature on the subject by drawing on four measures of campaigning to investigate the link: campaign spending, doorstep canvassing, telephone canvassing and leader visits. There is much evidence that levels of constituency campaigning vary across the period, with growing standard deviations, indicating that there is some disparity in constituency campaigning. Drawing on existing literature, the most likely explanation for this is marginality. Although there has long been a link between marginality and levels of campaigning, there has been an increase since 1997 when Labour won a landslide victory with a campaign targeted on key marginal seats. Campaigning in such constituencies has received a great deal of attention with members being bussed to neighbouring constituencies and specifically targeted election literature; such a focus is increasingly extending into the months and years preceding an election.

To explore the link between low levels of campaigning and safe constituencies, two approaches were taken. The first was an implicit association, exploring the links between marginality and continuous measures of campaigning (those which were available for multiple elections): the results demonstrated two sets of relationships. Firstly, as the previous majority of a constituency rose, overall campaign spending declined. Disaggregating this by party proved interesting, with Labour's defence of their landslide victory impacting their targeting capabilities and the increasing concentration of Conservative campaign strategy on marginal constituencies from 2001 onwards. Marginality also significantly affects overall levels of canvassing in constituencies; when disaggregating telephone and doorstep canvassing by party, the results indicate that marginality significantly affected telephone canvassing by the Conservatives and Labour. Chapter eight also indicated that there were significant differences in marginality between constituencies visited and those that were not for all party leaders, with marginal constituencies most likely to be visited. As constituencies become more marginal, levels of campaigning increase, echoing the findings of existing research. By extension this provides implicit support for the second sub-hypothesis that safer constituencies see less campaigning.

The fifth chapter also considered the role that local incumbency plays in affecting the relationship between marginality and campaigning, finding clear differences between incumbent and opposition candidates. Incumbent campaigning is often less affected by marginality than opposition campaigning, even in safer constituencies. However, there were significantly lower levels of campaign spending by opposition candidates in marginal and safe constituencies, with the most significant falls in ultra-safe constituencies. When using the explicit measure identifying low levels of campaigning, there was a clear link between the incumbency status of the local candidate and the amount of campaigning they conducted, with opposition parties significantly more likely to run low level campaigns than incumbents.

A clear contribution that this thesis has made to existing literature examining the relationship between marginality and campaigning is the refinement of an explicit low level campaigns measure. This originated in a study by Denver, Hands and McAllister (2004), but has been modified in this study, not only building on the findings in regards to variations in campaign levels between parties, but importantly taking local incumbency positions into account. Building on the basic quartile-based measure of levels of campaigning from the earlier study, modifications were made by producing party-specific measures of relative levels. More importantly, and building on earlier findings, I have made an innovative adjustment to the

measure by incorporating incumbency. This enables the identification of relative levels of campaigning according to whether a candidate was the incumbent or in opposition, eliminating the underestimation of opposition campaign levels. Such a measure offers a way to actively identify constituencies which are receiving relatively low levels of campaigning; although continuous measures work well, they give little indication of the relative levels of campaigning between constituencies and parties.

The case study of leader visits made during the 2010 general election in chapter eight also reveals how incumbency altered the relationship between marginality and campaigning. The chapter was able to disaggregate leader visits into distinctly defensive and offensive patterns. The results clearly show that Gordon Brown was operating a series of defensive visits to Labour-held constituencies whereas the two other leaders were focusing their visits on constituencies not held by their parties. This application of a measure to the UK context for the first time offers an important insight into the strategy involved in contemporary campaigning.

Low level campaigns can be harmful

The third sub-hypothesis explored the impact of low levels of campaigning on local electoral outcomes, operationalised as turnout and party vote share. This extends the conventional hypothesis in constituency campaigning studies, which focus on the effectiveness of intense campaigns. Campaigning matters, and the analysis demonstrates that where it is at a low level (i.e. in safe constituencies), it often reduces turnout and vote share. Chapters six, seven and eight explored this by using the available campaigning variables alongside the explicit measure identifying low levels of campaigning developed in chapter five. In this my thesis marks a departure from existing studies by considering what happens when campaigning is relatively lacking, in contrast to existing studies which look at impact of intensity. Yet my thesis also complements these studies by clearly demonstrating that campaigning matters; indeed it matters so much that in constituencies where parties campaign at a relatively low level it can often have a harmful impact on turnout and vote share figures.

As previously, the impact of low level campaigns was explored both implicitly through the use of continuous measures of campaigning, and explicitly using the measure of low levels of campaigning. The implicit study echoes existing literature by examining the effectiveness of intense campaigning on outcomes, but is interpreted in a different way by extending it; if

intense campaigning boosts turnout and vote share, then a relative lack of campaigning may reduce it.

Chapter six analysed the effect of campaigning on turnout, with indications that in many cases campaigning boosts turnout. This was extended in chapter eight by exploring the effectiveness of leader visits in boosting levels of turnout, a progression from existing studies which have so far only considered their role in boosting vote share. If, as the studies suggest, such visits can boost vote share, then the mechanisms may act in the same way to boost turnout, bringing the constituency campaign to the attention of local voters. However, it appears that this is not the case, with none of the leaders making a significant impact on turnout through their visits, regardless of incumbency.

As part of the explicit examination of the impact of low level campaigns on vote share and turnout, the measure of low level campaigns was utilised. For turnout, although not many of the results were significant, there were negative results in the majority of elections for low level spending campaigns run by both incumbent and opposition, although the results were less persuasive for the two canvassing variables. Incumbency once again is central, mediating in the relationship between campaigning and turnout when either the incumbent or opponent spent at a low level. When such campaigns were run by opposition parties, there was a more significant impact on turnout than when incumbent spend at a low level.

When exploring the impact of campaigning on vote share, a rise in campaigning had a significant impact on at least one party's vote share at each election during the period. Opposition candidates who ran low level campaigns had a greater negative impact on their party's vote share than when incumbent candidates ran such campaigns. This was echoed by the results of the examination of the effectiveness of leader visits in boosting party vote share, with significant boosts received from visits by David Cameron and Nick Clegg. No leader made a significant impact on their party's vote share in constituencies they already held, whereas offensive visits reaped electoral rewards for David Cameron and Nick Clegg. It would appear that offensive leader visits are more effective in boosting party vote share than defensive visits, with Gordon Brown's largely defensive campaign showing no significant impact on Labour vote share at all. Comparing the impact of campaigning on vote share with the results from turnout, there are clear indications that low levels of campaigning have a greater negative impact on vote share than turnout.

By exploring the potentially detrimental impact of low levels of campaigning on local electoral outcomes, this thesis adds to the literature by explicitly engaging with the full

impact of constituency campaigning. It not only considers what happens when parties campaign intensely, but also what happens in safer seats when they do not. This has implications on research and party electoral strategy in three respects. Firstly, it presents a case for researchers to consider what the impact of the increasing redirection of resources to marginal constituencies is on other constituencies. Secondly, it integrates the new variable of leader visits into constituency campaigning studies in the UK, situating it alongside conventional measures of campaigning. Lastly, there are implications for political parties in future elections, drawing attention to the harmful effect that low level campaigning has on their own vote share in safer constituencies, but also on voter turnout. While there have been many strategies to boost turnout, it may be that campaigning slightly harder in safe constituencies helps.

Validity and reliability of conclusions

Care has been taken to produce conclusions that are both reliable and valid from the analysis conducted here. All conclusions in regards to the three thesis sub-hypotheses have only been drawn from carefully constructed multiple regression models. Although bivariate relationships have been run in each chapter, they have served as a way of identifying valid control variables and thereby increasing the explanatory power of the multivariate models.

The multiple regression models have been produced from testing alternative relationships suggested by literature, and extensive trials were conducted to ensure that they provide the best possible account of the relationship between the independent and dependant variables. The inclusion of control variables is also central to the internal validity of the conclusions (Yin, 2003) and as hypothesised causality cannot be estimated directly using statistical tests (Cook and Campbell, 1979; Popper, 1972) these variables eliminate plausible rivals. In incorporating controls into the regression equation two aims must be counterbalanced; controlling for sufficient variables for the causal relationship to be established, and producing the most parsimonious model. To address these two aspects, all control variables were correlated with each other and any with correlations over .60 were removed.

Internal validity is clearly demonstrated by the clear delineation of cause and effect throughout this thesis. The conclusions of this thesis offer validity at the face level because

it follows the example of other authors in the field of constituency campaigning (Fisher and Denver, 2009) by beginning with an initial study into the variable of interest before moving on to trialling alternative multiple regressions. Following the example of Fisher and Denver's article, many alternative regressions were considered prior to the final model, but only the results for the final version have been displayed for reasons of space. The reliability of the conclusions appears good for two reasons; accuracy and coverage. To improve the accuracy of the data, extensive data cleaning was conducted prior to analysis. This is particularly important as it allowed the identification of any erroneous results which may have occurred particularly in the case of data sources which were typed into SPSS. Typing errors were identified at the point of data collection by running frequencies and descriptive analysis on each variable; this identified several errors which were easily checked and rectified, enhancing the accuracy of the data. Lastly, the results of the data analysis are a reliable foundation to base the thesis conclusions on because data are used from a range of data sources.

Limitations of the study

The first key limitation has been the availability of data from the party agent surveys. This thesis uses data from three party agent surveys which took place after the 1992, 1997 and 2001 general elections. However, data *were* available for five out of the six elections over the period, but there were issues of access and constituency attribution. The data from the 2005 party agent survey were, unlike the surveys for other years, not available on the Data Archive. To obtain the data for this year the project organisers were contacted, but were not forthcoming. The data for 2010 were available on the Data Archive, but only in a format that did not identify which constituency the data pertained to, making it impossible to reconcile with the existing dataset. Again, the survey organisers were contacted, but there was no response. This has some implications for the study, as party agent data on canvassing was only available for three of the six elections. As a result, the main focus of the study was shifted to campaign expenditure which was available throughout the period, with the canvassing variables as additional sources for those years for which they were available.

Leader visits have not been explored in any depth in the UK context. The data used in chapter eight are the first comprehensive account of such visits to constituencies during UK election campaigns, influenced by several existing studies in the USA and Canada.

However, space and time considerations have meant that in the present study, leader visits have been examined only as part of the 2010 election campaign. There is the potential to research leader visits historically in party and newspaper archives to build a more comparative set of data on leader visits. It may be that the 2010 campaign was unique in that expansionist leader visits had a significant impact on party vote share, and it will be interesting to examine the role that electoral context plays in altering the impact of leader visits in future campaigns. Data collection will be repeated in 2015, with the intention of forming a more comparative study over time, including sourcing historical data.

A key limitation of this study has been the inconclusiveness of many of the findings, which may be attributed to two factors: direct effects and simplicity of the model. Firstly, the measure of relative levels of campaigning in this thesis has been created as a binary variable which only examines the direct impact of such visits. It is possible that this is not the most effective way of measuring low level campaigns. As an alternative option rather than using the binary measures indicating low levels of campaigning as the independent variables in the regression models, they could be used as filters. By filtering the data in this way, continuous measures of the campaigning variables could be retained. As an example, a dataset could be created which pulls out all constituencies with Labour opponents running low level spending campaigns; this is accomplished by using the relevant binary low level campaign measure (LOQ1). Consequently, a regression model can be run in this dataset, but with continuous measures of campaigning (here spending) as the independent variable.

Lastly, this thesis could have explored in more detail the implications of low levels of campaigning in different categories of safe constituencies. There are five categories of marginality, and when levels of campaigning are examined across them, there is a significant drop in campaigning in ultra-safe seats. However, the regression models exploring the impact of campaigning on local electoral outcomes have not disaggregated the impact of low level campaigns according to these categories. An avenue for future research may be contrasting the relative impact of campaigning levels on different categories of safe constituencies.

Recommendations for future research

The present study offers three clear directions for future research: refinement and repetition of the campaign neglect measure, an examination of the reasons for continued campaigning in safe constituencies and repetition of the leader visit study. All would substantially increase not only the understanding of local campaigning in the UK, but also contribute to electoral strategies. This study has been the first to engage in depth with the issue of campaign neglect and examine the potential impact it has across multiple elections. The measure of low levels of campaigning as has been proposed here is a refinement of an existing measure, but there is the potential to adapt it further or alter it completely. One alternative may be the further distillation according to the five categories of marginality to measure relative levels of campaigning in constituencies from ultra-safe to ultra-marginal. There is certainly potential in the measure, but whatever adaptations are introduced, incumbency should remain a significant element.

The evidence presented here has also indicated that campaigning in safe constituencies is significantly lower than that in marginal constituencies, and can be potentially harmful when at a low level, particularly for opposition candidates. As Pattie and Johnston (2003b) argue, a concentration of resources on marginal seats is a rational distribution. After all, parties have limited resources and by concentrating them on those (marginal) constituencies which are most likely to change hands, they maximise their returns. Yet parties still expend resources in safe constituencies – even the very safest ones. A key area which could be progressed is the consideration of the motivations for continued campaigning in the safest constituencies.

There are three directions for future research into continued campaigning by incumbents; the first being security. Parties may continue to spend because they need safe constituencies as the backbone of their vote. Campaigning motivates existing supporters, and whilst there is not such urgency to do this in safe constituencies as there is in marginal constituencies, continued campaigning can maintain the vote. The second strand is the exploration that such campaigning is a result of resources: incumbent parties in safe constituencies are likely to have higher numbers of party members than in marginal constituencies, so more traditional methods (lost cost forms – i.e. doorstep canvassing) of campaigning are continued in safe constituencies simply because the capacity is there. Finally, continued campaigning may be conducted as part of maintaining party (and candidate) prestige and avoiding high profile

casualties at election time. To sufficiently test these theories, further qualitative analysis would have to be conducted, but they offer some ideas for the rationale behind campaigning in safe seats.

The study of leader visits represents an exciting opportunity for future research, as this study is the first time it has been collected nationwide and analysed in detail. It would be easily replicable during future election campaigns, with a future study by the author to collect new data in 2015 and compare visit effectiveness over the two elections. In time this data will accumulate, enabling longitudinal studies of leader visit effectiveness; data could even be gathered historically by using party archives. It could also be extended to cover more parties, perhaps examining the effectiveness of leader visits by leaders of the Scottish National Party or Plaid Cymru during general election campaigns. There is also the potential to extend the analysis to other electoral contexts, perhaps examining the effectiveness of leader visits during Scottish Parliamentary or Welsh Assembly election campaigns. This is a flexible variable with the potential to be explored in a variety of contexts, offering a great deal of scope for future research.

Constituency campaigning is effective; with this thesis supporting this by considering what happens when parties run relatively low level campaigns. The detrimental impact on both vote share and turnout may not appear large, but in an era of public disengagement with politics and low turnout, small factors can make a difference. After all, even safe seats are vulnerable – with more than fifty ultra-safe constituencies changing hands over the 1987 to 2010 period, causing some high-profile casualties (such as Michael Portillo in 1997). It is perhaps ironic that consistent evidence has demonstrated the effectiveness of opposition campaigns, yet this thesis has shown it is the opposition who are most likely to run low level campaigns in safe constituencies and to negatively impact local electoral outcomes. If opposition parties continue to neglect safe constituencies, their vote share is likely to decline. If the top two parties neglect safe constituencies, turnout will often fall. Either way, campaigning is effective and elections can be unpredictable. Resources have been redirected away from safe constituencies, with no real understanding of the potential harm this can have on the constituency come election time.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Descriptive statistics for canvassing variables 1992-2001 (page p130)

	1992	1997	2001
Doorstep canvassing			
Mean	30.53	21.98	18.59
Maximum	66.33	60.00	63.33
Minimum	1.67	.00	.00
Standard Deviation	14.79	14.36	12.31
Telephone canvassing			
Mean	-	14.67	7.44
Maximum	-	36.67	38.67
Minimum	-	1.67	.00
Standard Deviation	-	10.20	8.28

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911

Appendix 2:

Tukey post-hoc ANOVA testing of campaigning measures and marginality categories (table 5.4, p140)

Campaign spending

	Mean Difference	Standard Error
Ultra-marginal		
Fairly Marginal	1.741	1.101
Fairly Safe	5.151**	1.084
Very Safe	8.841**	1.072
Ultra-safe	17.488**	.877
Ultra-marginal	-1.741	1.101
Fairly Marginal		
Fairly Safe	3.410*	1.066
Very Safe	7.100**	1.054
Ultra-safe	15.747**	.855
Ultra-marginal	-5.151**	1.084
Fairly Marginal	-3.410*	1.066
Fairly Safe		
Very Safe	3.690**	1.036
Ultra-safe	8.647**	.833
Ultra-marginal	-8.841**	1.072
Fairly Marginal	-7.100**	1.054
Fairly Safe	-3.690**	1.036
Very Safe		
Ultra-safe	8.647**	.818
Ultra-marginal	-17.488**	.877
Fairly Marginal	-15.747**	.855
Fairly Safe	-12.337**	.833
Very Safe	-8.647**	.818
Ultra-safe		

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 3804
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 2 (cont.)

Doorstep canvassing

	Mean Difference	Standard Error
Ultra-marginal		
Fairly Marginal	2.745	2.59
Fairly Safe	3.245	2.76
Very Safe	2.838	2.53
Ultra-safe	6.573*	2.16
Ultra-marginal	-2.745	2.59
Fairly Marginal		
Fairly Safe	.501	2.64
Very Safe	.093	2.40
Ultra-safe	3.828	2.00
Ultra-marginal	-3.245	2.76
Fairly Marginal	-.501	2.64
Fairly Safe		
Very Safe	-.408	2.59
Ultra-safe	3.327	2.22
Ultra-marginal	-2.838	2.83
Fairly Marginal	-.093	2.40
Fairly Safe	.408	2.59
Very Safe		
Ultra-safe	3.735	1.93
Ultra-marginal	-6.573*	2.16
Fairly Marginal	-3.828	2.00
Fairly Safe	-3.327	2.22
Very Safe	-3.735	1.93
Ultra-safe		

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 2 (cont.)

Telephone canvassing

	Mean Difference	Standard Error
Ultra-marginal		
Fairly Marginal	.514	2.38
Fairly Safe	1.610	2.51
Very Safe	6.588*	2.33
Ultra-safe	8.544**	1.97
Ultra-marginal	-.514	2.38
Fairly Marginal		
Fairly Safe	1.096	2.38
Very Safe	6.074*	2.19
Ultra-safe	8.030**	1.81
Ultra-marginal	-1.610	2.51
Fairly Marginal	-1.096	2.38
Fairly Safe		
Very Safe	4.979	2.33
Ultra-safe	6.935**	1.97
Ultra-marginal	-6.588*	2.33
Fairly Marginal	-6.074*	2.19
Fairly Safe	-4.979	2.33
Very Safe		
Ultra-safe	1.956	1.73
Ultra-marginal	-8.544**	1.97
Fairly Marginal	-8.030**	1.81
Fairly Safe	-6.935**	1.97
Very Safe	-1.956	1.73
Ultra-safe		

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911
*Note – relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 3:

Descriptive statistics for party-specific canvassing variables 1992-2001, p151.

Doorstep

	1992	1997	2001
Doorstep			
Conservative			
Mean	41.58	27.45	27.00
Standard Deviation	25.29	23.25	24.66
Labour			
Mean	34.60	26.11	18.08
Standard Deviation	26.79	23.37	19.98
Liberal Democrat			
Mean	12.66	11.85	7.86
Standard Deviation	16.40	17.07	12.04
Telephone			
Conservative			
Mean		14.73	9.23
Standard Deviation		14.00	14.539
Labour			
Mean		19.36	11.52
Standard Deviation		19.57	17.61
Liberal Democrat			
Mean		6.48	1.28
Standard Deviation		10.13	4.15

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 1911

Appendix 4:

Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between marginality and campaign spending on a party-by-party basis, table 5.8, p154.

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservatives							
Previous majority	-.871** (.049)	-.687** (.148)	-.422** (.119)	-.510** (.082)	-1.091** (.120)	-1.319** (.099)	-1.007** (.110)
Career tenure	-.009 (.099)	-.334 (.283)	-.148 (.233)	-.022 (.168)	-.334 (.309)	-.004 (.211)	.531* (.207)
Marginality/career tenure interaction	.001 (.004)	.016 (.011)	.006 (.009)	-.001 (.006)	.001 (.009)	.003 (.008)	-.020* (.008)
Owner	.070** (.022)	-.027 (.083)	.598** (.128)	.607** (.095)	.087 (.146)	-.078 (.117)	.536** (.118)
Retired	.453** (.046)	-1.386 (1.985)	-.029 (.089)	.650** (.224)	.695 (.414)	.064 (.278)	.269 (.405)
Routine workers	-1.944** (.103)	-2.278** (.599)	-.202 (.197)	-5.577** (.631)	-.555 (.494)	-1.706** (.400)	-1.845** (.358)
Migrant	.320** (.103)	.248 (.231)	.533** (.186)	4.083** (.369)	1.158 (.611)	.504 (.532)	-.007 (.369)
Adjusted r^2	.304	.090	.083	.528	.528	.526	.442

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 4 (cont.)

Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between marginality and campaign spending on a party-by-party basis, table 5.8, p154.

	1987-2010	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Labour							
Previous majority	-.452** (.059)	-1.053** (.148)	-.483** (.139)	-.814** (.086)	-.241 (.155)	-.197 (.140)	-.735** (.136)
Career tenure	-.475** (.120)	-.130 (.283)	-.333 (.272)	.207 (.177)	-1.331** (.402)	-1.160** (.295)	-.319 (.256)
Marginality/career tenure interaction	.011* (.004)	.002 (.011)	.015 (.010)	.002 (.007)	.020 (.012)	.015 (.011)	.007 (.010)
Owner	-.391** (.026)	-.049 (.083)	-.844** (.150)	-.343** (.100)	-.472* (.190)	-.277 (.165)	-.956** (.146)
Retired	-.285** (.056)	3.069 (1.981)	-.008 (.105)	-1.100** (.235)	-1.493** (.538)	-2.019** (.389)	-3.087** (.501)
Routine workers	.220 (.125)	2.056** (.598)	.217 (.231)	1.719** (.662)	.401 (.642)	.677 (.561)	2.493** (.444)
Migrant	-.425** (.125)	-.189 (.230)	-.235 (.218)	-.215 (.388)	-.697 (.794)	-.104 (.746)	-1.205** (.457)
Adjusted r^2	.095	.271	.092	.318	.101	.138	.259

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 4 (cont.)

Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between marginality and campaign spending on a party-by-party basis, table 5.8, p154.

Liberal Democrats							
Previous majority	-.529** (.067)	-.574** (.195)	-.203 (.180)	-.082 (.126)	-.666** (.164)	-.714** (.144)	-.639** (.151)
Career tenure	-.079 (.138)	-.317 (.372)	.053 (.353)	.001 (.261)	-.034 (.425)	-.165 (.304)	.087 (.284)
Marginality/career tenure interaction	.001 (.005)	.011 (.015)	-.010 (.013)	-.009 (.010)	.008 (.013)	.004 (.011)	-.006 (.011)
Owner	-.063* (.030)	-.169 (.109)	1.052 (.194)**	.357* (.147)	-.048 (.201)	-.399* (.170)	-.107 (.162)
Retired	-.039 (.065)	-3.681 (2.610)	-.159 (.135)	2.649** (.346)	1.437* (.568)	1.130** (.401)	1.048 (.555)
Routine workers	-1.145* (.144)*	-3.551** (.788)	.572 (.299)	-3.164** (.976)	.391 (.678)	-1.216* (.583)	-1.988** (.490)
Migrant	1.129 (.144)	.731* (.304)	.842** (.282)	4.289** (.571)	3.327** (.839)	1.704* (.770)	2.489** (.506)
Adjusted r^2	.113	.080	.062	.249	.202	.170	.221

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 5:

Unstandardized regression coefficients for the relationship between marginality and canvassing on a party-by-party basis, table 5.9 p159

	Conservative door	Labour Door	Liberal Democrat Door
Previous majority	-.140 (.102)	-.085 (.096)	-.028 (.063)
Career tenure	.192 (.217)	.470* (.203)	.089 (.138)
Marginality/career tenure interaction	-.006 (.008)	-.013 (.007)	.001 (.005)
Owner	-.168** (.042)	-.149** (.037)	.048 (.025)
Retired	.219* (.094)	.140 (.099)	.175** (.061)
Routine workers	-.665** (.195)	-.797** (.294)	-.608** (.155)
Migrants	.053 (.207)	-.028 (.197)	.244 (.134)
Adjusted r^2	.052	.051	.024
	Conservative telephone	**Labour telephone**	**Liberal Democrat telephone**
Previous majority	-.312** (.079)	-.317** (.102)	-.012 (.051)
Career tenure	-.212 (.174)	-.178 (.219)	-.042 (.116)
Marginality/career tenure interaction	.010 (.006)	.000 (.008)	.000 (.004)
Owner	.047 (.089)	-.110 (.109)	-.041 (.060)
Retired	.257 (.214)	-.176 (.284)	.258 (.150)
Routine workers	.081 (.351)	-1.110** (.392)	-.214 (.203)
Migrants	-.312 (.379)	-.547 (.441)	.455 (.242)
Adjusted r2	.059	.089	.052

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 6:

Standard deviations for graph 5.3 (p164)

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Incumbent						
	13.44	19.33	15.32	17.45	18.48	19.75
Opposition						
	25.64	28.65	26.87	28.91	29.56	33.62

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.

Appendix 7:

ANOVA results comparing variation in campaign spending across categories of marginality, divided according to incumbency, p164.

	Mean	SD	n	F
Conservative				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	88.79	15.28	191	6.661**
Fairly Marginal	88.09	14.10	204	
Fairly Safe	84.76	15.79	224	
Very Safe	84.75	14.86	257	
Ultra-safe	83.05	18.82	762	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	86.12	14.21	201	189.246**
Fairly Marginal	84.42	15.78	217	
Fairly Safe	79.47	19.79	224	
Very Safe	72.41	22.76	208	
Ultra-safe	50.13	27.17	792	
Labour				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	77.38	25.68	185	31.936**
Fairly Marginal	84.74	17.76	214	
Fairly Safe	77.17	23.24	222	
Very Safe	71.44	25.79	219	
Ultra-safe	67.39	22.98	1040	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	80.62	23.03	142	16.052**
Fairly Marginal	71.89	28.84	149	
Fairly Safe	65.14	31.59	136	
Very Safe	58.56	32.35	149	
Ultra-safe	59.93	27.95	258	
Liberal Democrat				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	85.83	28.56	50	6.706**
Fairly Marginal	84.71	27.65	37	
Fairly Safe	80.53	27.85	40	
Very Safe	75.80	28.21	38	
Ultra-safe	59.80	38.15	69	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	72.39	31.87	79	27.647**
Fairly Marginal	75.90	28.62	86	
Fairly Safe	70.83	30.37	121	
Very Safe	64.35	31.12	147	
Ultra-safe	51.35	30.00	708	

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=3801. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 7 (cont.)

ANOVA results comparing variation in doorstep canvassing across categories of marginality, divided according to incumbency, p164.

	Mean	SD	n	F
Conservative				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	40.10	23.86	62	.646
Fairly Marginal	34.41	23.09	81	
Fairly Safe	37.95	21.19	62	
Very Safe	39.82	26.71	66	
Ultra-safe	37.62	25.07	221	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	33.58	24.01	55	5.658**
Fairly Marginal	32.87	22.60	62	
Fairly Safe	27.30	22.89	46	
Very Safe	35.45	25.99	58	
Ultra-safe	20.15	22.24	212	
Labour				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	39.72	28.68	36	5.292**
Fairly Marginal	29.91	21.74	67	
Fairly Safe	25.92	24.68	60	
Very Safe	26.78	20.98	60	
Ultra-safe	22.25	24.27	337	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	34.07	22.37	55	.576
Fairly Marginal	27.75	24.89	51	
Fairly Safe	28.64	26.48	45	
Very Safe	29.73	22.48	45	
Ultra-safe	31.63	25.19	87	
Liberal Democrat				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	19.28	14.11	18	.735
Fairly Marginal	24.83	23.34	6	
Fairly Safe	26.83	19.80	12	
Very Safe	22.40	26.14	10	
Ultra-safe	12.63	17.89	8	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	15.40	9.58	15	.707
Fairly Marginal	16.61	18.61	23	
Fairly Safe	16.97	19.74	35	
Very Safe	21.03	19.79	38	
Ultra-safe	16.01	16.48	206	

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=1911. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 7 (cont.)

ANOVA results comparing variation in telephone canvassing across categories of marginality, divided according to incumbency, p164.

	Mean	SD	n	F
Conservative				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	16.68	14.50	37	1.373
Fairly Marginal	13.40	14.99	55	
Fairly Safe	10.44	9.03	32	
Very Safe	12.26	14.35	38	
Ultra-safe	11.44	12.05	104	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	18.12	18.57	42	7.567**
Fairly Marginal	15.91	16.50	47	
Fairly Safe	18.83	15.45	29	
Very Safe	13.32	13.76	31	
Ultra-safe	6.92	13.91	130	
Labour				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	20.86	18.18	22	6.556**
Fairly Marginal	23.30	26.30	45	
Fairly Safe	19.75	18.78	40	
Very Safe	23.38	23.99	29	
Ultra-safe	11.26	16.63	208	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	24.45	18.82	38	4.865**
Fairly Marginal	24.86	22.90	35	
Fairly Safe	24.57	24.36	28	
Very Safe	13.63	16.99	26	
Ultra-safe	11.13	13.95	52	
Liberal Democrat				
Incumbents				
Ultra-Marginal	11.38	12.91	13	1.661
Fairly Marginal	.00	.000	2	
Fairly Safe	3.00	4.95	9	
Very Safe	4.13	4.45	8	
Ultra-safe	6.00	8.94	5	
Opposition				
Ultra-Marginal	6.20	6.65	5	.587
Fairly Marginal	6.90	7.85	10	
Fairly Safe	4.33	5.31	18	
Very Safe	5.80	10.06	20	
Ultra-safe	3.61	8.22	61	

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=1911. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 8:

T-testing low level campaign spending (single measure) and previous majority, table 5.11, p169-70.

	Low level	Other levels	T	df
1987				
Incumbents				
Conservative	23.97 (9.13)	19.20 (10.26)	-4.337**	185.285
Labour	22.65 (12.92)	17.30 (11.80)	-2.769**	208
Lib Dem	9.78 (7.10)	13.30 (9.61)	.829	25
Opposition				
Conservative	24.30 (8.78)	12.59 (9.04)	-7.574**	177
Labour	19.69 (8.88)	10.65 (7.22)	-5.882**	131
Lib Dem	31.70 (9.29)	22.37 (8.74)	-8.043**	310
1992				
Incumbents				
Conservative	22.65 (11.21)	20.88 (11.30)	-1.299	366
Labour	28.43 (18.65)	21.95 (15.47)	-2.384*	84.678
Lib Dem	14.24 (14.30)	15.67 (11.55)	.247	22
Opposition				
Conservative	29.98 (15.20)	17.98 (13.98)	-5.291**	210
Labour	16.87 (10.05)	14.60 (10.67)	-1.122	143
Lib Dem	29.35 (11.73)	24.12 (10.73)	-3.300**	254
1997				
Incumbents				
Conservative	24.41 (10.79)	19.81 (12.26)	-3.290**	161.590
Labour	30.91 (15.33)	19.83 (14.07)	-5.498**	271
Lib Dem	13.32 (8.25)	9.62 (7.58)	-.916	17
Opposition				
Conservative	34.80 (12.98)	16.10 (12.47)	-10.131**	247
Labour	29.14 (9.61)	13.92 (10.05)	-8.916**	181
Lib Dem	34.41 (10.78)	21.78 (10.25)	-6.847**	169

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=3804. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 8 (cont.)

T-testing low level campaign spending (single measure) and previous majority, table 5.11, p169-70.

2001				
Incumbents				
Conservative	13.69 (9.28)	12.92 (9.41)	-.455	162
Labour	42.11 (13.41)	26.59 (16.74)	-9.585**	217.684
Lib Dem	13.70 (10.15)	10.54 (7.09)	-1.189	45
Opposition				
Conservative	46.33 (12.30)	20.15 (13.12)	-17.251**	383
Labour	14.06 (7.68)	11.19 (8.13)	-1.549	99
Lib Dem	42.41 (17.91)	17.22 (14.41)	-6.504**	36.401
2005				
Incumbents				
Conservative	16.55 (7.39)	14.80 (7.65)	-1.276	163
Labour	36.53 (13.65)	24.05 (14.47)	-7.569**	398
Lib Dem	17.93 (4.22)	14.36 (11.16)	-1.686	49.639
Opposition				
Conservative	38.97 (10.25)	17.92 (11.37)	-15.400**	350
Labour	18.61 (6.14)	14.69 (8.18)	-2.761**	66.606
Lib Dem	35.58 (16.05)	21.16 (14.28)	-4.508**	113
2010				
Incumbents				
Conservative	20.42 (8.63)	15.84 (9.24)	-3.147**	207
Labour	29.23 (14.87)	18.63 (12.35)	-5.964**	126.065
Lib Dem	18.05 (9.42)	11.20 (9.09)	-2.587*	62
Opposition				
Conservative	26.94 (10.03)	12.02 (8.10)	-10.951**	94.675
Labour	22.44 (8.84)	14.45 (9.99)	-4.344**	149
Lib Dem	35.90 (12.64)	19.71 (10.76)	-8.460**	183

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=3804. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 8 (cont.)

T-testing low level doorstep canvassing (single measure) and previous majority, table 5.11, p169-70.

1992				
	Incumbents			
	Conservative	21.33 (11.88)	22.23 (11.18)	.417	150
	Labour	29.71 (14.66)	18.64 (14.55)	-3.324**	105
	Lib Dem	13.26 (8.21)	17.05 (11.92)	.508	11
	Opposition			
	Conservative	30.00 (17.00)	16.08 (13.00)	-3.771**	83
	Labour	21.91 (11.98)	11.67 (8.28)	-3.835**	28.962
	Lib Dem	26.61 (11.15)	24.98 (10.65)	-.714	145
1997				
	Incumbents			
	Conservative	20.57 (11.67)	20.76 (12.40)	.096	217
	Labour	31.14 (16.26)	18.74 (12.64)	-4.603**	61.825
	Lib Dem	10.12 (12.44)	10.07 (6.09)	-.010	12
	Opposition			
	Conservative	27.58 (16.14)	17.46 (13.75)	-3.902**	162
	Labour	18.60 (13.76)	16.61 (11.40)	-.811	129
	Lib Dem	29.25 (12.38)	26.06 (10.00)	-1.181	104
2001				
	Incumbents			
	Conservative	16.58 (14.66)	13.33 (7.96)	-1.155	35.292
	Labour	40.40 (14.98)	27.77 (15.77)	-5.634**	269
	Lib Dem	16.57 (10.59)	10.27 (7.56)	-1.771	29
	Opposition			
	Conservative	38.72 (15.86)	22.19 (16.59)	-6.085**	199
	Labour	16.81 (8.05)	10.44 (7.65)	-2..888**	67
	Lib Dem	34.61 (20.80)	21.19 (15.84)	-2.381*	20.529

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=1911. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 8 (cont.)

T-testing low level telephone canvassing (single measure) and previous majority, table 5.11, p169-70.

1997				
Incumbents				
Conservative	24.03 (12.04)	18.65 (12.21)	-2.055*	155
Labour	21.47 (14.41)	14.62 (12.45)	-1.991*	80
Lib Dem	17.96 (4.54)	7.68 (6.27)	-2.091	6
Opposition				
Conservative	13.44 (13.80)	13.06 (10.64)	-.121	80
Labour	21.33 (11.36)	14.10 (11.04)	-2.818**	108
Lib Dem	35.48	24.41 (10.56)	-1.054	43
2001				
Incumbents				
Conservative	15.02 (10.07)	13.53 (10.36)	-.677	106
Labour	41.34 (13.28)	26.95 (16.19)	-7.248**	141.580
Lib Dem	4.37 (8.82)	9.33 (8.32)	-1.565	27
Opposition				
Conservative	38.10 (17.45)	17.43 (12.25)	-9.172**	134.196
Labour	17.36 (9.00)	8.66 (5.43)	-4.431**	36.894
Lib Dem	33.06 (18.22)	18.70 (14.93)	-3.522**	61.829

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=1911. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 9:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between party-specific doorstep canvassing and turnout, p199.

	1992	1997	2001
Marginality	.126 (.086)	-.019 (.024)	-.085* (.040)
Conservative canvassing	.009 (.032)	-.019 (.017)	-.002 (.017)
Labour canvassing	.019 (.023)	.011 (.015)	.044 (.030)
Liberal Democrat canvassing	.101* (.045)	.060* (.024)	-.009 (.033)
Career tenure	.065 (.043)	-.015 (.022)	-.020 (.038)
Marginality/ Conservative canvass interaction	-.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)
Marginality/Labour canvass interaction	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	-.002 (.001)
Marginality/ Liberal Democrat canvass interaction	-.003 (.002)	-.001 (.001)	.002 (.001)
Owner Occupiers	.254** (.068)	.046 (.029)	-.058 (.044)
Retired	.087 (.071)	.042 (.054)	.271** (.082)
Routine	-.377 (.258)	-.562** (.167)	-.032 (.102)
Migrants	.040 (.034)	.134 (.104)	-.052 (.125)
Previous turnout	.582** (.080)	.715** (.057)	.676** (.092)
Adjusted r^2	.731	.828	.832

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=1911. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 9 (cont.)

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between party-specific telephone canvassing and turnout (p199)

	1997	2001
Marginality	.207 (.076)	-.068* (.028)
Conservative canvassing	-.194 (.077)	.070* (.029)
Labour canvassing	.342 (.087)	-.040 (.028)
Liberal Democrat canvassing	.073 (.251)	-.095 (.084)
Career tenure	-.494 (.125)	-.031 (.041)
Marginality and Conservative canvass interaction	.008 (.003)	-.004* (.002)
Marginality and Labour canvass interaction	-.025 (.007)	.000 (.002)
Marginality and Liberal Democrat canvass interaction	-.015 (.012)	.015 * (.007)
Owner Occupiers	.139 (.087)	-.026 (.045)
Retired	.004 (.130)	.259* (.101)
Routine	-1.654 (.609)	-.043 (.111)
Migrants	1.466 (.342)	-.068 (.141)
Previous turnout	.169 (.290)	.724** (.091)
Adjusted r^2	.927	.847

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010, n=1911.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 10:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I1O1 – both running low level

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.010	.025	-.012	-.034**	-.099**	-.024*
	(.012)	(.013)	(.008)	(.012)	(.015)	(.010)
I1O1	-.688	1.064	-2.773*	-.271	.059	.483
	(1.259)	(.1.158)	(1.091)	(1.356)	(1.269)	(.831)
Career tenure	-.036*	-.009	.003	.028	-.032	-.016
	(.014)	(.019)	(.011)	(.022)	(.018)	(.010)
Marginality and I1O1 interaction	.022	-.037	.058	.008	-.006	-.005
	(.042)	(.040)	(.030)	(.032)	(.034)	(.025)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.221**	.059**	.002	.050*	.062**
	(.010)	(.024)	(.015)	(.017)	(.020)	(.014)
Retired	-.401	-.058**	.089**	.206**	.034	-.169**
	(.231)	(.015)	(.029)	(.050)	(.046)	(.043)
Routine	.042	.049	-.531**	-.084	-.168*	-.431**
	(.069)	(.033)	(.084)	(.059)	(.067)	(.039)
Migrants	.022	.041	.091	.117	.119	-.152**
	(.027)	(.032)	(.049)	(.075)	(.089)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.821**	.753**	.766**	.907**	.678**	.630**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.030)	(.041)	(.030)	(.024)
Adjusted r^2	.727	.623	.837	.855	.766	.847

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 10 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I1O2

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.010	.018	-.020**	-.034**	-.100**	-.020*
	(.011)	(.012)	(.008)	(.012)	(.014)	(.010)
I1O2	-.517	-.586	-3.675**	-1.594	1.016	.501
	(1.014)	(1.389)	(.995)	(1.265)	(1.362)	(.770)
Career tenure	-.036*	.053	.143**	.035	-.028	-.016
	(.014)	(.052)	(.033)	(.042)	(.047)	(.010)
Marginality and I1O2 interaction	.016	-.012	-.001	.031	-.033	-.032
	(.044)	(.019)	(.011)	(.022)	(.018)	(.033)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.220**	.059**	.004	.049*	.062**
	(.010)	(.024)	(.015)	(.017)	(.020)	(.014)
Retired	-.406	-.057**	.088**	.202**	.033	-.168**
	(.231)	(.015)	(.029)	(.050)	(.046)	(.043)
Routine	.045	.042	-.525**	-.081	-.172**	-.429**
	(.070)	(.033)	(.082)	(.058)	(.067)	(.039)
Migrants	.019	.042	.114*	.111	.117	-.150**
	(.026)	(.032)	(.048)	(.075)	(.089)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.820**	.755**	.767**	.906**	.677**	.630**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.029)	(.039)	(.030)	(.024)
Adjusted r^2	.727	.624	.840	.856	.767	.847

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 10 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I1O3

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.011	.031*	-.012	-.052**	-.101**	-.022*
	(.011)	(.012)	(.008)	(.011)	(.014)	(.010)
I1O3	-.104	3.456**	.308	.146	-1.224	-.320
	(1.590)	(1.139)	(.862)	(1.232)	(2.009)	(.932)
Career tenure	-.037**	-.008	-.001	.016	-.032	-.016
	(.014)	(.018)	(.011)	(.018)	(.018)	(.010)
Marginality and I1O3 interaction	-.010	-.186**	-.024	.003	.074	.006
	(.066)	(.054)	(.040)	(.077)	(.120)	(.043)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.222**	.056**	-.014	.050*	.063**
	(.010)	(.024)	(.015)	(.022)	(.020)	(.014)
Retired	-.402	-.057**	.091**	.148**	.032	-.170**
	(.231)	(.015)	(.030)	(.042)	(.046)	(.043)
Routine	.041	.047	-.523**	-.057	-.169*	-.430**
	(.069)	(.033)	(.084)	(.050)	(.067)	(.039)
Migrants	.019	.045	.105*	.050	.120	-.150**
	(.026)	(.031)	(.049)	(.063)	(.089)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.820**	.749**	.774**	.912**	.679**	.629**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.030)	(.045)	(.030)	(.024)
Adjusted r^2	.724	.631	.835	.855	.767	.847

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 10 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I1O4

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.010	.021	-.012	-.051**	-.110**	-.026**
	(.011)	(.012)	(.008)	(.011)	(.013)	(.009)
I1O4	-1.023	-.590	.323	3.422	-10.145**	-3.376**
	(1.654)	(1.270)	(1.052)	(1.888)	(1.613)	(1.026)
Career tenure	-.037**	-.009	-.007	.017	-.023	-.017
	(.014)	(.019)	(.011)	(.018)	(.017)	(.010)
Marginality and I1O4 interaction	.030	.010	-.001	-.141	.726**	.214**
	(.105)	(.052)	(.069)	(.091)	(.109)	(.071)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.224**	.055**	-.015	.048*	.065**
	(.010)	(.024)	(.015)	(.022)	(.019)	(.014)
Retired	-.401	-.059**	.089**	.151**	.024	-.172**
	(.231)	(.015)	(.030)	(.042)	(.044)	(.043)
Routine	.037	.050	-.522**	-.070	-.169**	-.422**
	(.069)	(.033)	(.084)	(.050)	(.064)	(.039)
Migrants	.020	.042	.103*	.037	.104	-.152**
	(.026)	(.032)	(.049)	(.063)	(.085)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.821**	.752**	.776**	.907**	.676**	.626**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.030)	(.045)	(.029)	(.023)
Adjusted r^2	.725	.622	.835	.856	.786	.849

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 10 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I2O1

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.008	.029*	-.011	-.051**	-.099**	-.019*
	(.011)	(.012)	(.008)	(.011)	(.014)	(.010)
I2O1	-4.168*	2.610	-1.427	.939	1.296	.280
	(1.967)	(1.347)	(1.007)	(1.267)	(1.860)	(1.041)
Career tenure	-.038**	-.011	.020	.015	-.033	-.016
	(.014)	(.018)	(.011)	(.018)	(.018)	(.010)
Marginality and I2O1 interaction	.159*	-.120*	-.001	-.020	-.041	-.024
	(.074)	(.050)	(.030)	(.030)	(.054)	(.034)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.222**	.058**	-.015	.050*	.063**
	(.010)	(.024)	(.015)	(.022)	(.020)	(.014)
Retired	-.405	-.059**	.087**	.150**	.034	-.166**
	(.230)	(.015)	(.029)	(.042)	(.046)	(.043)
Routine	.047	.050	-.512	-.057	-.165*	-.431**
	(.068)	(.033)	(.084)	(.050)	(.067)	(.039)
Migrants	.018	.040	.100*	.050	.122	-.152**
	(.026)	(.032)	(.048)	(.063)	(.089)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.819**	.752**	.767**	.913**	.678**	.626**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.030)	(.045)	(.030)	(.024)
Adjusted r^2	.727	.626	.836	.855	.767	.847

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 10 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I3O1

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.011	.022	-.011	-.060**	-.096**	-.023*
	(.012)	(.013)	(.008)	(.011)	(.014)	(.010)
I3O1	-.385	1.021	.166	-.794	.772	-1.706
	(1.184)	(1.401)	(1.469)	(1.998)	(1.594)	(.985)
Career tenure	-.037*	-.011	-.015	.018	-.034	-.016
	(.014)	(.019)	(.011)	(.018)	(.018)	(.010)
Marginality and I3O1 interaction	.005	-.017	-.001 (.044)	.050	-.042	.059
	(.043)	(.046)		(.041)	(.045)	(.041)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.225**	.056**	-.016	.049*	.064**
	(.010)	(.024)	(.015)	(.022)	(.020)	(.014)
Retired	-.398	-.059**	.088**	.151**	.030	-.175**
	(.231)	(.015)	(.030)	(.042)	(.046)	(.043)
Routine	.044	.050	-.528**	-.050	-.170*	-.429**
	(.069)	(.033)	(.084)	(.049)	(.067)	(.039)
Migrants	.018	.043	.102*	.151	.113	-.152**
	(.026)	(.032)	(.049)	(.062)	(.089)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.820**	.752**	.774**	908**	.681**	.628**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.030)	(.045)	(.030)	(.024)
Adjusted r^2	.724	.623	.836	.857	.767	.847

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 10 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of spending and turnout, table 6.11, p201.

I4O1

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Marginality	.001	.021	-.010	-.053**	-.100**	-.023
	(.011)	(.012)	(.008)	(.011)	(.014)	(.009)
I4O1	-2.271	-1.565	.909	-1.952	-.169	-1.098
	(1.330)	(1.622)	(1.392)	(1.558)	(2.029)	(1.545)
Career tenure	-.034*	-.009	.000	.013	-.032	-.016
	(.014)	(.019)	(.011)	(.018	(.018)	(.010)
Marginality and I4O1 interaction	.116*	.039	-.043	.000	-.002	.086
	(.046)	(.064)	(.040)	(.047)	(.067)	(.058)
Owner Occupiers	-.003	.222**	.056**	-.015	.050*	.063**
	(.009)	(.024)	(.015)	(.022)	(.020)	(.014)
Retired	-.336	-.059**	.088**	.151**	.033	-.170**
	(.229)	(.015)	(.030)	(.042)	(.046)	(.043)
Routine	.026	.050	-.525**	-.063	-.171*	-.431**
	(.068)	(.033)	(.084)	(.049)	(.067)	(.039)
Migrants	.021	.041	.113*	.038	.118	-.148**
	(.026)	(.032)	(.049)	(.063)	(.089)	(.038)
Previous turnout	.827**	.754**	.775**	.906**	.678**	.632**
	(.027)	(.038)	(.030)	(.045)	(.030)	(.023)
Adjusted r^2	.730	.623	.835	.857	.766	.848

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I1O1 – both running low level

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.031	-.010	-.068**	-.016	-.067**
	(.021)	(.013)	(.020)	(.025)	(.021)
I1O1	3.131	.027	.843	.728	.016
	(1.968)	(1.039)	(1.796)	(1.850)	(1.591)
Career tenure	-.004	.004	.037	.011	.030
	(.030)	(.018)	(.034)	(.031)	(.036)
Marginality and I1O1 interaction	-.087	-.018	.005	.010	-.013
	(.070)	(.032)	(.050)	(.077)	(040)
Owner Occupiers	.181**	.059*	.015	.077	-.001
	(.047)	(.024)	(.040)	(.038)	(.043)
Retired	-.147*	.050	.159*	-.010	.267**
	(.058)	(.046)	(.076)	(.078)	(.091)
Routine	-.440*	-.578**	-.131	-.472	-.119
	(.185)	(.128)	(.090)	(.258)	(.091)
Migrants	.046	.119	-.083	.195	-.105
	(.111)	(.076)	(.113)	(.134)	(.115)
Previous turnout	.726**	.722**	.763**	.723**	.750**
	(.070)	(.045)	(.078)	(.070)	(.087)
Adjusted r^2	.703	.817	.834	.648	.849

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I1O2

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.023	-.016	-.067**	-.016	N/A
	(.021)	(.012)	(.020)	(.024)	
I1O2	-.879	-.817	-2.076	-9.158	
	(1.556)	(1.465)	(2.144)	(21.130)	
Career tenure	-.005	.007	.038	.017	
	(.031)	(.017)	(.034)	(.031)	
Marginality and I1O2 interaction	.016	.019	.081	.557	
	(.081)	(.048)	(.159)	(1.094)	
Owner Occupiers	.182**	.059*	.018	.082*	
	(.047)	(.024)	(.041)	(.038)	
Retired	-.156**	.051	.158*	-.039	
	(.058)	(.046)	(.076)	(.081)	
Routine	-.452*	-.595**	-.115	-.429	
	(.183)	(.127)	(.091)	(.255)	
Migrants	.053	.120	-.076	.194	
	(.113)	(.076)	(.113)	(.133)	
Previous turnout	.727**	.726**	.769**	.721**	
	(.070)	(.045)	(.079)	(.069)	
Adjusted r^2	.698	.816	.834	.650	

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I1O3

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.028	-.032	-.066**	.005	-.072**
	(.020)	(.012)	(.020)	(.025)	(.020)
I1O3	.531	-2.802	-2.567	14.806**	-.817
	(2.475)	(1.533)	(2.700)	(5.113)	(2.091)
Career tenure	-.008	.004	.035	.009	.035
	(.031)	(.017)	(.034)	(.030)	(.036)
Marginality and I1O3 interaction	-.042	.129*	.078	-.593**	-.006
	(.088)	(.059)	(.086)	(.206)	(.101)
Owner Occupiers	.179**	.058*	.016	.056	-.006
	(.047)	(.024)	(.040)	(.037)	(.042)
Retired	-.156**	.051	.149	-.014	.252**
	(.058)	(.045)	(.076)	(.074)	(.090)
Routine	-.478*	-.647**	-.108	-.275	-.133
	(.185)	(.128)	(.092)	(.257)	(.089)
Migrants	.041	.120	-.078	.099	-.108
	(.112)	(.076)	(.113)	(.134)	(.115)
Previous turnout	.719**	.718**	.773**	.694**	.772**
	(.070)	(.044)	(.081)	(.067)	(.081)
Adjusted r^2	.699	.819	.834	.677	.849

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I1O4

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.021	-.014	-.075**	-.017	-.067**
	(.020)	(.012)	(.021)	(.024)	(.020)
I1O4	-1.827	-.171	-3.068	-1.986	1.926
	(4.243)	(1.101)	(1.745)	(4.249)	(1.881)
Career tenure	-.005	.007	.031	.013	.029
	(.030)	(.018)	(.034)	(.031)	(.036)
Marginality and I1O4 interaction	.154	-.019	.073	.150	-.073
	(.171)	(.046)	(.047)	(.649)	(.064)
Owner Occupiers	.187**	.059*	.020	.080*	-.015
	(.047)	(.024)	(.040)	(.039)	(.042)
Retired	-.174**	.047	.122	-.017	.266**
	(.059)	(.046)	(.078)	(.078)	(.089)
Routine	-.448*	-.589**	-.119	-.435	-.141
	(.183)	(.127)	(.090)	(.255)	(.090)
Migrants	.045	.121	-.106	.211	-.121
	(.112)	(.075)	(.112)	(.135)	(.116)
Previous turnout	.716**	.730**	.746**	.737**	.779**
	(.070)	(.045)	(.078)	(.070)	(.081)
Adjusted r^2	.702	.817	.837	.648	.850

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I2O1

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.025	-.012	-.069**	-.012	-.070**
	(.020)	(.012)	(.020)	(.024)	(.020)
I2O1	-4.857	1.907	.312	2.161	-2.897
	(7.066)	(1.259)	(2.131)	(2.427)	(3.129)
Career tenure	-.005	.009	.033	.015	.025
	(.030)	(.017)	(.034)	(.031)	(.036)
Marginality/I2O1 interaction	.139	-.116	.013	-.050	.093
	(.295)	(.065)	(.049)	(.124)	(.084)
Owner Occupiers	.182**	.058*	.020	.072	.020
	(.047)	(.024)	(.040)	(.038)	(.048)
Retired	-.167**	.055	.157*	-.022	.262**
	(.058)	(.046)	(.076)	(.078)	(.089)
Routine	-.477**	-.596**	-.125	-.437	-.118
	(.183)	(.126)	(.091)	(.255)	(.090)
Migrants	.043	.150	-.082	.185	-.073
	(.111)	(.077)	(.113)	(.134)	(.120)
Previous turnout	.726**	.729**	.767**	.781**	.754**
	(.070)	(.044)	(.079)	(.078)	(.082)
Adjusted r^2	.701	.818	.834	.650	.850

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I3O1

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.029	-.015	-.067**	-.010	-.075**
	(.020)	(.012)	(.020)	(.025)	(.021)
I3O1	4.515	.055	-1.917	.485	-1.109
	(4.084)	(1.058)	(2.472)	(1.852)	(1.782)
Career tenure	.001	.007	.039	.014	.034
	(.031)	(.018)	(.035)	(.031)	(.036)
Marginality/I3O1 interaction	-.183	-.005	.052	-.059	.037
	(.137)	(.050)	(.066)	(.110)	(.047)
Owner Occupiers	.181**	.059*	.021	.077*	-.009
	(.047)	(.024)	(.040)	(.038)	(.042)
Retired	-.154**	.051	.157*	-.022	.260**
	(.057)	(.046)	(.077)	(.080)	(089)
Routine	-.459*	-.594**	-.116	-.411	-.142
	(.183)	(.128)	(.090)	(.264)	(.091)
Migrants	.052	.123	-.086	.197	-.102
	(.111)	(.076)	(.113)	(.133)	(.115)
Previous turnout	.731**	.726**	.758**	.734**	.777**
	(.070)	(.045)	(.079)	(.070)	(.081)
Adjusted r^2	.702	.816	.833	.647	.849

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 11 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the relationship between low levels of canvassing and turnout, table 6.12 p203.

I4O1

	Doorstep			Telephone	
	1992	**1997**	**2001**	**1997**	**2001**
Marginality	.024	-.016	-.064**	-.014	-.066**
	(.020)	(.012)	(.020)	(.024)	(.020)
I4O1	-3.458	1.819	1.379	-1.843	3.367
	(6.392)	(2.147)	(5.513)	(1.699)	(2.155)
Career tenure	-.006	.008	.033	.016	.034
	(.030)	(.017)	(.035)	(.031)	(.036)
Marginality/ I4O1 interaction	.126	-.045	-.072	.055	-.138
	(.221)	(080)	(.179)	(.123)	(.085)
Owner Occupiers	.184**	.060*	.022	.070	-.005
	(.047)	(.024)	(.040)	(.038)	(.042)
Retired	-.161**	.053	.150	-.014	.263**
	(.058)	(.046)	(.077)	(.078)	(.090)
Routine	-.450*	-.604**	-.126	-.391	-.141
	(.183)	(.127)	(.091)	(.257)	(.089)
Migrants	.052	.119	-.090	.166	-.075
	(.113)	(.075)	(.113)	(.134)	(.117)
Previous turnout	.724**	.723**	.757**	.737**	.771**
	(.071)	(.045)	(.079)	(.070)	(.080)
Adjusted r^2	.698	.817	.833	.652	.852

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 12:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of campaign spending on vote share between 1987 and 2010, table 7.6, p222.

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Conservative proportion	.034** (.007)	-.036** (.010)	-.013 (.008)
Labour proportion	-.039** (006)	.122** (.008)	-.059** (.007)
Lib Dem proportion	-.014** (.005)	-.002* (.007)	.055** (.007)
Marginality	-.075** (.023)	.220** (.033)	-.101** (.025)
Career tenure	.012 (.010)	-.021 (.014)	.009 (.011)
Marginality/ Con prop interaction	.001* (.000)	-.001 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Marginality/Lab prop interaction	.000 (.000)	-.001** (.000)	.001** (.000)
Marginality/ LD prop interaction	.000 (.000)	-.001** (.000)	.000* (.000)
Owner	.028** (.004)	-.120** (.006)	.090** (.005)
Retired	-.045** (.012)	-.023 (.097)	-.032 (.013)
Routine	.061** (.023)	-.291** (.032)	.138** (.027)
Migrants	.128** (.023)	-..085** (.032)	-.003 (.025)
Previous vote share	.890** (.009)	.777** (.011)	.715** (.013)
Adjusted r^2	.917	.878	.796

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 13:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of campaign spending on vote share, table 7.7, p225.

Conservative vote share

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative spend	.026 (.040)	.018 (.020)	.052** (.010)	-.096** (.037)	.129** (.019)	.018 (.011)
Labour spend	.008 (.035)	-.018 (.017)	-.040** (9.011)	-.017 (.026)	-.076** (.015)	-.007 (.009)
Liberal Democrat spend	-.051 (.027)	-9.459E (.013)	.002 (.007)	.031 (.024)	-.077** (.015)	-.001 (.008)
Marginality	-.131 (.159)	-.026 (.077)	.001 (.035)	-.175 (.097)	-.118* (.054)	-.049 (.034)
Career tenure	-.029 (.043)	.009 (.025)	.005 (.013)	.002 (.053)	.034 (.027)	.006 (.015)
Marginality/Contel interaction	.001 (.002)	.001 (.001)	.000 (.000)	.002 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	.001 (.000)
Marginality/Labtel interaction	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.001* (.000)	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	2.114E (.000)
Marginality/LDtel interaction	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	-1.648E (.000)	.000 (.001)	.001 (.001)	-.001 (.000)
Owner	-.002 (.029)	.031 (.033)	.024 (.016)	-.008 (.043)	.093** (.029)	.043* (.020)
Retired	-.734 (.683)	.011 (.021)	.021 (.035)	.122 (.123)	-.091 (.069)	-.145* (.062)
Routine	-.419 (.215)	-.053 (.046)	-.038 (.110)	.175 (.145)	-.326** (.100)	.188** (.060)
Migrants	.050 (.080)	.024 (.044)	-.048 (.064)	-.311 (.189)	.062 (.130)	.014 (.057)
Previous vote share	.891** (.048)	.871** (.019)	.790** (.019)	.962* (.066)	.663** (.028)	.960** (.018)
Adjusted r^2	.735	.872	.950	.804	.879	.950

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 13 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of campaign spending on vote share, table 7.7, p225.

Labour vote share

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative spend	.042 (.048)	.020 (.030)	-.042** (.016)	.063 (.038)	-.022 (.021)	-.074** (.014)
Labour spend	.033 (.046)	.076** (.024)	.101** (.018)	.024 (.031)	.214** (.017)	.0744** (.014)
Liberal Democrat spend	-.010 (.034)	-.032 (.019)	-.068** (.012)	-.040 (.027)	-.047** (.016)	-.004 (.011)
Marginality	.303 (.199)	.179 (.112)	-.039 (.055)	.232* (.109)	.581** (.061)	-.044 (.050)
Career tenure	-.024 (.052)	-.060 (.037)	-.009 (.019)	.025 (.059)	-.001 (.030)	.006 (.021)
Marginality and Con tel interaction	-.003 (.002)	-.001 (.001)	.001* (.001)	-.002 (.001)	-.002* (.001)	.001 (.001)
Marginality and Lab tel interaction	-.001 (.002_	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	-.004** (.001)	.000 (.001)
Marginality and LD tel interaction	.000 (.002)	-.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)
Owner	.040 (.035)	-.221** (.048)	-.004 (.024)	-.103* (.048)	.000 (.033)	-.296** (.027)
Retired	1.025 (.832)	-.054 (.030)	-.162** (.055)	.201 (.140)	-.119 (.078)	.005 (.090)
Routine	.605* (.258)	.110 (.066)	.010 (.164)	-.325* (.164)	.452** (.113)	-.451** (.086)
Migrants	.014 (.097)	-.135* (.063)	-.068 (.099)	.103 (.210)	-.154 (.147)	-.520** (.081)
Previous vote share	.879** (.056)	.817** (.022)	.862** (.024)	.785** (.061)	.418** (.024)	.755** (.027)
Adjusted r^2	.748	.857	.953	.847	.885	.917

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 13 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of campaign spending on vote share, table 7.7, p225.

Liberal Democrat vote share

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Conservative spend	-.077** (.029)	-.011 (.022)	.007 (.015)	-.010 (.037)	-.040* (.017)	.007 (.012)
Labour spend	-.057* (.027)	-.052** (.018)	-.076** (.017)	-.022(.028)	-.071** (.013)	-.052** (.010)
Liberal Democrat spend	.099** (.021)	.018 (.016)	.075** (.013)	.089* (.035)	.165** (.014_	.066** (.010)
Marginality	-.215 (.117)	-.062 (.082)	.004 (.051)	-.014 (.104)	-.098* (.048)	-.020 (.040)
Career tenure	.032 (.032)	.039 (.027)	.027 (.018)	-.074 (.057)	.034 (.024)	-.006 (.018)
Marginality and Con tel interaction	.003* (.001)	.000 (.001)	-.001** (.001)	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)	-.001 (.000)
Marginality and Lab tel interaction	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001* (.001)	.001* (.000)
Marginality and LD tel interaction	-.001 (.001)	.002* (.021)	3.450E (.001)	-.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001* (.000)
Owner	-.038 (.021)	.125** (.034)	.016 (.022)	.056 (.047)	-.015 (.026)	.114** (.022)
Retired	-.482 (.500)	.068** (.026)	.058 (.052)	-.295* (.134)	.052 (.063)	.072 (.074)
Routine	-.097 (.155)	-.119 (.063)	-.369* (.151)	.261 (.155)	-.076 (.091)	.131 (.068)
Migrants	-.050 (.058)	.073 (.047)	.236** (.090)	.176 (.203)	.172 (.119)	.448** (.068)
Previous vote share	.761** (.046)	.841** (.028)	.773** (.030)	.657** (.081)	.379** (.025)	.646** (.025)
Adjusted r^2	.663	.750	.878	.675	.832	.865

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 14:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of canvassing on vote share, table 7.8, p228.

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Conservative doorstep	.017 (.016)	.003 (.021)	-.027 (.016)
Labour doorstep	-.021 (.016)	.015 (.021)	.009 (.017)
Lib Dem doorstep	.003 (.025)	-.041 (.033)	.000 (.027)
Marginality	-.011 (.028)	.011 (.036)	-.007 (.028)
Career tenure	.022 (.025)	.010 (.033)	.008 (.026)
Marginality/Con door interaction	3.711E-5 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Marginality/ Lab door interaction	-6.438E-5 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	3.224E-5 (.001)
Marginality/LD door interaction	.000 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.000 (.001)
Owner	.027* (.011)	-.089** (.014)	.077** (.010)
Retired	.034 (.027)	-.031 (.035)	-.026 (.026)
Routine	-.120 (.094)	.061 (.116)	.132 (.083)
Migrants	-.001 (.035)	-.024 (.45)	.013 (.036)
Previous vote share	.914 (.035)	.907**(.021)	.935** (.028)
Adjusted r^2	.917	.926	.851

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 14 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the effectiveness of canvassing on vote share, table 7.8, p228.

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Conservative telephone	-.063 (.083)	.027 (.056)	-.040 (.052)
Labour telephone	.025 (.070)	.011 (.049)	.013 (.047)
Lib Dem telephone	-.139 (.422)	-.062 (280)	-.172 (.271)
Marginality	-.072 (.069)	-.015 (.050)	.006 (.043)
Career tenure	-.084 (.115)	-.028 (.075)	.033 (.070)
Marginality/Con tel interaction	.007 (.005)	.001 (.003)	.001 (.003)
Marginality/Lab tel interaction	-.011* (.005)	-.003 (.003)	.001 (.003)
Marginality/ LD tel interaction	.014 (.022)	-.006 (.014)	.003 (.013)
Owner	-.008 (.103)	-.160* (.067)	.003 (.062)
Retired	.258 (.245)	-.081 (.181)	-.012 (.160)
Routine	.123 (.370)	-.288 (.250)	-.156 (.231)
Migrants	.218 (.503)	-.052 (.330)	-.471 (.316)
Previous vote share	.845 (.084)	.938** (.044)	1.059** (.066)
Adjusted r^2	.836	.953	.881

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010.
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 15:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.9, p231.

Conservative Incumbent

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Low level binary	2.779 (2.622)	.947 (1.053)	-1.780* (.777)	-1.087 (2.267)	-1.411 (1.340)	-.646 (1.240)
% Majority 2005	.254** (.073)	.173** (.028)	.026 (.031)	.056 (.065)	.222** (.043)	-.062 (.051)
Career Tenure	.009 (.052)	.016 (.025)	.010 (.016)	-.083 (.057)	-.010 (.027)	.042 (.023)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	-.133 (.104)	-.044 (.042)	.042 (.030)	.125 (.144)	.073 (.075)	.028 (.058)
Owner	.043 (.034)	-.085* (.037)	-.028 (.029)	.139 (.094)	-.021 (.041)	-.035 (.050)
Retired	-.226 (.802)	.006 (.020)	.053 (.039)	-.013 (.131)	-.047 (.067)	-.219* (.088)
Routine	-.147 (.237)	-.025 (.048)	.080 (.165)	.440* (.210	-.569** (.132)	-.180 (.108)
Migrants	-.002 (.094)	-.129 (.089)	-.083 (.084)	.376 (.290)	-.505** (.185)	-.093 (.140)
Previous vote	.426** (.094)	.623** (.040)	.839** (.063)	.422* (.167)	.133* (.052)	.845** (.097)
Adjusted r^2	.392	.723	.811	.238	.423	.594

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 15 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.9, p231.

Labour Incumbent

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Low level binary	4.527	-2.326	.275	-3.438	-3.448*	-.243
	(4.062)	(1.547)	(1.248)	(4.704)	(1.405)	(1.359)
% Majority 2005	.100	.219**	-.153**	.099	.356**	.290**
	(.140)	(.036)	(.042)	(.170)	(.025)	(.057)
Career Tenure	-.030	-.012	.011	-.120	.026	.048
	(.106)	(.047)	(.031)	(.104)	(.034)	(.032)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	.076	.086	.009	.081	.125**	-.026
	(.164)	(.054)	(.039)	(.113)	(.038)	(.045)
Owner	.112	-.059	-.086**	-.093	.077*	-.260**
	(.071)	(.057)	(.030)	(.098)	(.031)	(.037)
Retired	.826	.139	-.238	-.137	-.036	.084
	(1.877)	(.099)	(.128)	(.239)	(.092)	(.158)
Routine	1.867**	.969**	-.016	.358	.211*	-.886**
	(.583)	(.287)	(.227)	(.235)	(.108)	(.129)
Migrants	-.404	-.054	-.307*	-.380	-.210	-.513**
	(.550)	(.050)	(.150)	(.311)	(.143)	(.112)
Previous vote	.669**	.237**	.993**	.448	.105**	.361**
	(.210)	(.046)	(.073)	(.308)	(.034)	(.097)
Adjusted r^2	.385	.638	.780	.340	.749	.683

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 15 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.9, p231.

Liberal Democrat Incumbent

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Low level binary	17.931*	-1.635	-2.563	26.115	-4.300	-4.657
	(5.870)	(4.710)	(5.808)	(27.353)	(13.220)	(3.695)
% Majority 2005	.205	.359	-.083	1.448	.062	-.175
	(.181)	(.172)	(.205)	(1.380)	(.079)	(.115)
Career Tenure	-.458	-.032	-.034	3.122*	.032	.190
	(.339)	(.310)	(.173)	(1.210)	(.140)	(.121)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	-1.204*	-.464	.133	-1.192	.310	.172
	(.439)	(.338)	(.518)	(2.654)	(.734)	(.191)
Owner	-.125	.256	.072	2.352	-.216	.130
	(.200)	(.215)	(.236)	(1.530)	(.157)	(.109)
Retired	4.074	.042	.340	2.582	.199	.048
	(4.004)	(.169)	(.893)	(2.044)	(.241)	(.351)
Routine	-.667	2.336	.605	4.693*	-1.092*	.246
	(1.368)	(1.454)	(2.282)	(1.747)	(.498)	(.414)
Migrants	.477	-.363	1.054	9.569	-.923	.380
	(1.536)	(.984)	(1.115)	(4.551)	(.557)	(.267)
Previous vote	.831**	.654*	.590	-2.675	.174**	.460**
	(.227)	(.236)	(.364)	(1.847)	(.062)	(.156)
Adjusted r^2	.662	.581	.636	.125	.232	.203

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 15 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.9, p231.

Conservative Opponent

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Low level binary	5.247	-1.788	-2.255*	-5.405*	-4.906**	-.001
	(4.328)	(1.698)	(.928)	(2.406)	(1.608)	(1.255)
% Majority 2005	.121	-.150**	-.011	-.114*	-.325**	.052
	(.118)	(.033)	(.041)	(.051)	(.030)	(.046)
Career Tenure	-.048	-.022	-.017	.002	-.080*	-.058*
	(.093)	(.043)	(.019)	(.047)	(.031)	(.026)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	-.213	.021	.039	.107	.064	-.064
	(.184)	(.058)	(.028)	(.059)	(.044)	(.051)
Owner	-.022	.094	.073**	.075	.058*	.068*
	(.066)	(.052)	(.019)	(.053)	(.029)	(.033)
Retired	.959	.131	.022	-.068	-.140	-.177
	(1.522)	(.076)	(.070)	(.109)	(.072)	(.096)
Routine	-1.129*	-.904**	.001	-.033	-.193*	.317**
	(.484)	(.255)	(.136)	(.130)	(.094)	(.087)
Migrants	.507	.035	.065	-.154	-.021	.053
	(.461)	(.044)	(.089)	(.167)	(.129)	(.093)
Previous vote	1.069**	.443**	.699**	.872**	.317**	.973**
	(.173)	(.052)	(.072)	(.057)	(.045)	(.070)
Adjusted r^2	.396	.690	.813	.755	.847	.798

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 15 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.9, p231.

Labour Opponent

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Low level binary	6.212*	.535	-1.030	-4.129	1.447	-5.490*
	(3.015)	(1.203)	(1.588)	(3.027)	(2.325)	(2.169)
% Majority 2005	-.361*	-.321**	-.095	-.134	-.110*	.097
	(.166)	(.040)	(.074)	(.131)	(.048)	(.0530
Career Tenure	-.016	.021	.008	.047	-.055	-.024
	(.110)	(.048)	(.027)	(.080)	(.035)	(.041)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	-.344*	-.075	-.045	.238	-.123	.167
	(.151)	(.063)	(.056)	(.206)	(.119)	(.097)
Owner	.016	-.031	.096**	-.225*	-.005	-.311**
	(.047)	(.064)	(.037)	(.097)	(.059)	(.052)
Retired	1.979	.104	.015	.177	-.059	.012
	(1.395	(.077)	(.074)	(.273)	(.112)	(.169)
Routine	.019	-.040	-.092	-.418	.379*	-.172
	(.243)	(.047)	(.242)	(.310)	(.162)	(.161)
Migrants	.033	-.017	.105	-.104	-.157	-.544**
	(.065)	(.133)	(.125)	(.289)	(.230)	(.145)
Previous vote	.199	.169**	.730**	.778**	.286**	.969**
	(.273)	(.046)	(.112)	(.232)	(.047)	(.083)
Adjusted r^2	.492	.663	.835	.575	.496	.700

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 15 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level spending campaigns on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.9, p231.

Liberal Democrat Opponent

	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
Low level binary	-6.024	2.303	-14.354**	-6.081	-3.987	-6.127*
	(3.204)	(2.252)	(3.329)	(9.982)	(2.793)	(2.424)
% Majority 2005	-.035	-.022	-.117	-.091	-.224**	-.086
	(.073)	(.050)	(.088)	(.159)	(.059)	(.078)
Career Tenure	.048	.021	.078	-.014	.027	-.018
	(.044)	(.040)	(.045)	(.260)	(.054)	(.035)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	.100	-.110	.317**	.071	.038	.052
	(.102)	(.076)	(.098)	(.275)	(.079)	(.071)
Owner	-.064	.257**	.153*	-.114	.001	.095*
	(.037)	(.058)	(.071)	(.202)	(.057)	(.044)
Retired	-1.144	.032	.150	-.237	-.176	.249
	(.790)	(.031)	(.111)	(.362)	(.132)	(.160)
Routine	-.172	-.072	-1.133*	.244	.280	.038
	(.329)	(.074)	(.461)	(.585)	(.256)	(.147)
Migrants	.137	.488**	.221	.626	.759**	.515**
	(.211)	(.160)	(.244)	(.750)	(.273)	(.140)
Previous vote	.839**	.766**	.888**	.488	.277**	.415**
	(.121)	(.076)	(.145)	(.394)	(.089)	(.126)
Adjusted r^2	.468	.577	.693	.233	.655	.623

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 16:

Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level canvassing on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.10, p234.

	Incumbent door	Opponent door	Incumbent telephone	Opponent telephone
Conservative				
Low level binary	.476	-.171	-1.083	-2.257
	(.343)	(.568)	(1.043)	(1.171)
% Majority 2005	.088**	-.101**	-.042	-.011
	(.019)	(.034)	(.091)	(.067)
Career Tenure	.023	-.012	.053	.070
	(.015)	(.028)	(.064)	(.045)
Maj/Quartile Interaction	.013	-.029	.025	.042
	(.014)	(.018)	(.037)	(.047)
Owner	.020**	.039**	.034	-.051
	(.006)	(.013)	(.092)	(.033)
Retired	-.019	.139*	-.043	.176
	(.018)	(.056)	(.118)	(.125)
Routine	.054	-.021	.351	.113
	(.066)	(.097)	(.334)	(.135)
Migrants	-.013	.109	.079	-.080
	(.052)	(.098)	(.239)	(.152)
Previous vote	.750**	.661**	1.004**	.986**
	(.035)	(.063)	(.180)	(.117)
Adjusted r^2	.846	.822	.823	.852

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 16 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level canvassing on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.10, p234.

	Incumbent door	Opponent door	Incumbent telephone	Opponent telephone
Labour				
Low level binary	.944 (.650)	-.725 (.433)	1.070 (1.915)	-1.220 (.905)
% Majority 2005	.220** (.033)	-.310** (.035)	-.138 (.090)	-.081 (.050)
Career Tenure	.014 (.033)	.039 (.023)	.011 (.065)	.032 (.022)
Marginality/low level interaction	.022 (.020)	-.021 (.019)	.000 (.055)	.043 (.041)
Owner	-.088** (.014)	-.128** (.009)	-.129** (.041)	-.094** (.032)
Retired	.125 (.064)	.076 (.050)	.278 (.166)	.057 (.065)
Routine	-.254** (.096)	-.084* (.038)	-.238 (.151)	-.040 (.113)
Migrants	-.009 (.040)	-.187** (.067)	-.142 (.189)	-.138 (.092)
Previous vote	.395** (.057)	.363** (.049)	1.086** (.174)	.871** (.075)
Adjusted r^2	.745	.874	.718	.910

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 16 (cont.): Unstandardized regression coefficients examining the impact of low level canvassing on vote share by incumbent and opposition candidates, table 7.10, p234.

	Incumbent door	Opponent door	Incumbent telephone	Opponent telephone
Liberal Democrat				
Low level binary	-5.878 (9.373)	-.290 (.947)	-21.509 (80.733)	-8.944** (3.133)
% Majority 2005	.188 (.234)	-.018 (.041)	.918 (1.207)	-.014 (.089)
Career Tenure	-.174 (.333)	-.006 (.033)	.189 (.738)	.008 (.077)
Marginality/low level interaction	.463 (.485)	-.030 (.028)	1.230 (5.545)	.197 (.101)
Owner	.045 (.108)	.082** (.013)	1.013 (.708)	-.047 (.134)
Retired	.367 (.332)	.064 (.052)	1.051 (1.302)	-.288 (.169)
Routine	.760 (.874)	-.095 (.071)	2.645 (1.516)	.137 (.323)
Migrants	1.318 (1.177)	.348** (.126)	3.623 (3.839)	.333 (.338)
Previous vote	.563 (.294)	.806** (.074)	.508 (2.180)	.918** (.195)
Adjusted r^2	.104	.620	.084	.644

*Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05*

Appendix 17:

Leader visit coefficients for linear regression model examining the effectiveness of leader visits in different incumbency contexts, table 8.11, p259.

Conservative-held seats

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Marginality	-.033 (.092)	.118 (.078)	-.050 (.091)
David Cameron visit	.602 (1.493)	1.688 (1.392)	-3.566* (1.647)
Gordon Brown visit	.736 (1.517)	1.386 (1.410)	-2.659 (1.653)
Nick Clegg visit	-2.463 (1.295)	-.961 (1.236)	4.350** (1.453)
Average spend	-.030 (.031)	.060* (.029)	.026 (.034)
Career tenure	.038 (.022)	-.006 (.021)	.012 (.025)
Marginality/ spend interaction	-.002 (.022)	-.004* (.001)	.003 (.002)
Owner	-.048 (.002)	-.092 (.047)	.087 (.056)
Retired	-.183* (.050)	.129 (.082)	.060 (.095)
Routine	-.255* (.086)	-.407** (.103)	.365** (.121)
Migrants	-.025 (.109)	-.194 (.128)	.389* (.152)
Previous vote share	.864** (.096)	.740 (.030)	.702** (.036)
Adjusted r^2	.617	.837	.781

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 17 (cont.): Leader visit coefficients for linear regression model examining the effectiveness of leader visits in different incumbency contexts, table 8.11, p259.

Labour-held seats

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Marginality	-.012 (.035)	.102 (.080)	.036 (.044)
David Cameron visit	1.598** (.488)	-1.093 (.808)	-1.294* (.617)
Gordon Brown visit	.602 (.464)	-.007 (.784)	.021 (.586)
Nick Clegg visit	-1.048 (.718)	.179 (1.102)	3.632** (.913)
Average spend	.034 (.020)	-.130** (.033)	.051* (.025)
Career tenure	-.011 (.019)	.052 (.032)	-.044 (.024)
Marginality/spend interaction	.000 (.001)	.002 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Owner	.024 (.023)	-.240** (.037)	.076** (.028)
Retired	.023 (.093)	-.012 (.155)	-.140 (.118)
Routine	.327** (.327)	-1.027** (.127)	.392** (.097)
Migrants	-.008 (.066)	-.450** (.110)	.373** (.085)
Previous vote share	1.021** (.029)	.389** (.097)	.745** (.043)
Adjusted r^2	.929	.701	.693

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*

Appendix 17 (cont.): Leader visit coefficients for linear regression model examining the effectiveness of leader visits in different incumbency contexts, table 8.11, p259.

Liberal Democrat held seats

	Conservative vote share	Labour vote share	Liberal Democrat vote share
Marginality	-.430 (.328)	.153 (.187)	.369 (.410)
David Cameron visit	2.149 (2.210)	.917 (1.297)	-2.766 (2.700)
Gordon Brown visit	.812 (3.601)	-.737 (2.059)	-.375 (4.392)
Nick Clegg visit	.339 (1.904)	-.810 (1.088)	.564 (2.344)
Average spend	-.010 (.099)	-.121* (.055)	.052 (.120)
Career tenure	-.094 (.096)	-.078 (.056)	.187 (.121)
Marginality/spend interaction	.009 (.006)	.001 (.003)	-.010 (.007)
Owner	.072 (.103)	-.148* (.060)	.050 (.119)
Retired	-.198 (.297)	.282 (.177)	.280 (.369)
Routine	.321 (.338)	-.820** (.191)	.066 (.422)
Migrants	.078 (.224)	-.389** (.131)	.379 (.278)
Previous vote share	.994** (.083)	1.067** (.048)	.494** (.157)
Adjusted r^2	.835	.944	.204

Source: Local Campaigning and Election Results 1987-2010. N = 630
*Note – the table displays the unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Relationships where significant are marked ** p<0.01, * p<0.05.*